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VALENTIN.

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VALENTIN.

A

French Boy's Story of Sedan.

BY HENRY KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF 'GEOFFREY HAMLYN,' 'OLD MARGARET,' 'THE HARVEYS,'
'HORNBY MILLS,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VALENTIN.

CHAPTER I.

MY father, at this present moment, in spite of all that has come and gone, is a very rich man. I do not say that he is rich as the English understand it, but he has even now rents to the amount of 48,000 francs a year, about 2000*l.* sterling. Had he been poor, it might have been better or worse for me, but he is rich even now. I am the only son, and so I have been brought up in entire idleness. I have had certainly a fine education, partly at Metz and partly at home; but I have never done anything great, simply because I never was taught

how to do anything. I am informed that some of you young Englishmen are in exactly the same position ; but it is hard to believe, because I have always been taught that you are so very practical.

You demand my nationality ; I reply that I am entirely uncertain of it. I *call* myself a Frenchman. Still, although the best part of my father's estates are now in Germany, I begin to believe that I have no nationality at all ; I speak German quite as well as I do French. My heart is in France, but my home is in Germany. The English and the Scotch were at deadly war for many years, yet now they are but one nation. You can understand then that I, although a Frenchman, have no prejudices ; in fact, I think that the people of the Rhine Provinces are much more intelligent than the peasants of Alsace, Lorraine, and Champagne, but I like the French the best.

When I talk with a good Englishman he will always allow that the Scotch are

better educated than the English, but he loves the English best; may it not be so with me? I must, however, leave speculation and come to fact. I must, I fear, tell you all about myself, except my character. That I cannot give you, for I do not know it myself. Pasteur Leroi, who prepared me for confirmation, and started me to school at Metz, wept when I went away, and told me that I was a little angel; whereas Monseigneur the Bishop of Luxemburg on one occasion, in consequence of my upsetting a chair during mass, while I was on a visit there, had a private interview with me, boxed my ears, and said I was a little devil. So do not you see I am rather abroad between the opinions of these two gentlemen, both of whom are infallible?

As I cannot give you anything more about my character (I was forgetting again, old Mathilde always says that I am a wehr wolf, which is not true, and she is an Alsatian), I had better tell you all the facts I

know about my birth, parentage, and education.. I hope before I begin that you will entirely dismiss from your minds the remark which old Mathilde made. I am not a wehr wolf at all ; I am not *afraid* of wolves, I allow that. I have killed more wolves than any young man of my age, but I have let many go because I make them my hunting dogs when I want venison. It is an easy thing when you know how to do it; still, the reputation of being too familiar with the wolves has been carried by old Mathilde, the pedlar, from one end of the Ardennes to the other, and has done me no good.

At Petange, in Luxemburg, the other day, I brought in a roebuck on my shoulders, from the woods above Longwy late at night, and cut him up in the back kitchen. I wanted a steak cut off it for my supper. Would you believe it, the idiotic landlord sent for the priest and had the meat sprinkled with holy water before he would cook

a pound of it? In fact, I have my enemies, and that old witch, Mathilde, is one of them. She has the evil eye, that woman; she cursed the Brandenburg Hussars all through the wood by Audun la Tige, *but she showed them the way.* She has not been very poor since. She has taken the auberge at Audun la Romain. I know her, she tried to ruin me, but she has not succeeded. Having for the present blown off the steam about this most abominable old smuggling pedlar (with whom I hope to be right sides uppermost before I die), I will proceed as quietly as the memory of my unutterable wrongs will allow me. That old wretch, indeed! I beg of you! She ought to be ducked in a horsepond. I was so glad when the Chasseurs d'Afrique caught her and towed her along behind a horse, with a picket rope, to show them the line of the Luxemburg frontier. Well she knew it, the smuggling old trot.

You say that I enrage myself in an un-

necessary manner about this old woman. Bah! it is always the way with you English ; you are seldom enraged, but when you are it is to good purpose! If you say that I am unnecessarily enraged about this old woman, wait until I have told my story, and decide then. I tell you that I hate her entirely.

I was born in Sedan, at the house at the corner of the street opposite the Statue of Turenne, as you go towards Bazeilles. My father's town house was there, his country house was at Fond de Givonne. My father was from Trèves, but my mother taught me to speak, and taught me in French, and not in German, as my father spoke generally. She also told me very early in life that the German Rhine Provinces were the property of the French ; my father, on the other hand, told me persistently that Alsace and Lorraine—or, as he called them, Elsass and Lotheringen—were the property of the Germans. I cared but little for it all

then, but I loved my mother better than my father, and so I grew up a Frenchman.

Our accursed fortifications, the things which have ruined us for a generation, if not for all time, were made by Vauban; evil be to his name, he has entrapped more armies than any other man ever did. I hope some day or another that we shall have no fortifications at all, but shall fight as you English propose to do behind your hedges, from point to point, where neither cavalry nor artillery can act, and where an enemy's pioneer who offers to put a spade in the ground is a dead man. I should very much like to see the army which could fight through Kent, so long as you have a hundred thousand regulars, with a hundred thousand sharpshooting volunteers to back them, and your fleet behind the enemy. But I am talking of your country, not of mine.

In Lorraine and Champagne there is neither hedge nor ditch; you can gallop a

horse for miles and miles without one single jump. There is no place of shelter like your continuous English hedges, from which you can fight from point to point, and among which a Garibaldian rabble might beat the best German troops. Our great Revolution (of which you have doubtless heard) subdivided the land so infinitesimally that every half acre was valuable, and so fences were entirely done away with. While we were on the offensive this did not matter, we had Strasbourg, Metz, Toul, Phalsbourg, Montmédy, Longwy, Thionville, between us and the outer barbarians, who beat us in art and in education; but when we were on the defensive the matter was utterly changed. Our troops were detained to defend these garrisons, the enemy took but little notice of them, leaving but a moiety of their force to mask and to reduce them, while the main stream marched on, after they passed us in our disaster. I am, however, anticipating, though not in an unnecessary manner.

Every English boy should know how to defend his home, and every English boy can learn it. *Mon Dieu!* if we French boys had had a Kent or a Sussex, not to mention a sea between us and Germany, this would never have happened. See what you English boys have—liberty and opportunity to drill with the best arms round your own homes ; see that you do so. Let the English boy who will not drill be deprived of other sports. There should be a moral compulsion. You will see why I say this in time.

CHAPTER II.

THE first thing I can remember is the old slope on the glacis of Sedan, beyond the gate which leads to Fond de Givonne. My constant attendant, Jacques Cartier, who was husband of the Mathilde previously spoken of, used to bring me here and lay me in the sun, when I was very little. He was a very good man, and my father trusted him profoundly; but I remember very well to have heard my mother say that he was not happy with his wife. I know that he was trusted continually with my precious person, and also I know that he kept a little shop by the bridge on the Meuse, where he sold images and crucifixes. His wife was a travelling pedlar woman, even then, and she used to make more money

than he did, for I have heard her tell him of it a score of times in the most angry manner. The fact is that she was a smuggler. She put it about that the wolves would not touch me; I can swear that they never would touch her. I have known her come from Bouillon, over the hill, in the snow on the darkest night.

That side of Sedan towards Fond de Givonne is very pleasant in summer; for a great part of the glacis is planted with trees, which whisper gently in the summer wind, and where you can play or read, or lie on your back looking up on the summer sky and the few fleeting clouds which traverse the blue sky of Champagne and cast purple shadows on the growing vines. There are nice places also, secret places, between the scarp and counterscarp, where the flowers grow, toad-flax, purple geranium, wild pinks, and campanulas. Here, on the glacis, one can have great amusement when the boys of the Ecole Polytechnique come

out; for by borrowing the citizens' ladders one can make a real escalade, and get into the casemates and frighten the wives of the artillerymen who live there. They are mostly middle-aged women, and when we came through the embrasures into their rooms, would throw saucpans and casseroles at us, crying out that we were young devils of the Lycée; we would eat or spill their soup, on the other hand, which was amusing, though wrong.

Under the guidance of Jacques Cartier, I soon began to go farther afield than the glacis, right up into Fond de Givonne, to my father's country house, on the road to Givonne and Bouillon. I always thought then, and I think now, that this house, lying at the end of the broad dusty street, is one of the most beautiful houses in the world. You could scarcely see it from the street, for it was blocked in by a tall white wall; but when you had opened the door in the wall, you saw the porch at the

end of a long arched trellis-work of the vines of Champagne, brilliant green in the hottest sun, with clusters of dull purple grapes hanging down. Underneath this beautiful arcade grew roses, Souvenir de Malmaison, General Jacqueminot, Gloire de Dijon, your own ravishing English moss-rose, and your Cabbage rose. When the vines were bare, and the March wind was shrill and wild, we had other flowers—Violets, Primroses, Crocuses, and Hepaticas. When the vines began to shelter us from the sun with their cool greenery, we had other flowers—Jonquils, Narcissus, and the pale blue English Cowslip, the Diana among flowers, which my father had brought with his own hand from Yorkshire, and which not one Englishman in ten knows even by name. In autumn, when the vine-leaves would fall yellow and sear whenever the guns of the fortress were fired for practice, and when the windows would rattle in the still autumn air with concussion, when little

Marie would pretend to be frightened, and say, 'It is the Allies who come,' then we would have other flowers — Reines Marguerites and Chrysanthemums. But when the vine-leaves began to drop, I cared little for the flowers, because my heart was in the forest, in the old forest of the Ardennes, the forest which your Shakespeare has immortalised for ever.

You will notice, then, that this long alley of vines completely hid the house until you were close upon the porch. When you came face to face with the house itself, you would, were you a stranger, say, 'Ah!' and look aloft at the wonderful mass of high sloping roofs, with dormer windows and clustered turrets, the home of innumerable pigeons. The shadowless white château soared aloft into the blue sky most splendidly; beside you was a fountain, playing night and day in a basin set in grass; below were woodlands; beyond was Sedan; and far away rolled the

glorious old Meuse, like a silver riband, toward Namur, toward Rotterdam, toward the cold northern sea.

‘It was a pleasant place in times of yore,
But something ails it now, the place is cursed.’

Heaven! how I loved it! My whole life seems bound up in it; every sacred stone of it is precious to me, and it seems quite impossible that it can ever be seriously touched. Strategically, it is of no use whatever; for it lies in a hollow under the brow of the hill, and its only possible utilisation is for the headquarters of a general or a crown prince.

Some part of the old house dated from the time of Godfrey de Bouillon, an old and somewhat turbulent neighbour of my ancestors. I have read every biography of that gentleman, but I cannot find the name of my mother’s family (did I tell you my mother’s family name? no, by the bye, I don’t think I did. De Quintain, if

you please) mentioned in it. The main part of the building is sixteenth century, exactly the sort of building which I see reproduced in Scotland, at Holyrood, at Grandtully, at Weem, and elsewhere ; for the Scotch were much abroad, and copied us in many things, notably in our architecture.

I have studied our château at Fond de Givonne; but as our archives were lost in the Revolution, I can make out but little about it. My father is an Alsatian Schneider, and the château came to him on his marriage with Mademoiselle de Quintain ; so he cares nothing about the legends of the De Quintains. My mother tells me frankly that she does not know, and that her mother did not know, the reason why on every keystone and gargoyle appears the wolf's head. It is our crest also ; but my mother does not know why. Old Mathilde says that she knows, and she knows so much of the wickedness of this world,

smuggling old woman as she is, that I should not be surprised if she *did* know. You don't know what an abominable old woman that is. She makes horrible witch rhymes, and pretends that they are old legends. I asked her about the wolf business, and why our house was all over wolves, once when I was very young, and she answered,

‘Quintain est mort,
Le loup de Sedan ;
Les traiteurs dehors,
Et les Prussiens dedans.’

She always hated my father, and I am bound to say that the feeling was entirely mutual. I cannot get at the bottom of the wolf story. I do not say that I have not heard at least one dozen versions of it; but I cannot verify a single one. I have been told, for example, that my mother's ancestor, De Quintain, was a squire of Godfrey de Bouillon, and that he saved him from a wolf at Libramont, and that Godfrey de Bouillon gave him our castle and

lands for doing it. About which I do not happen to believe one word, simply because no man of the commonest nerve need fear a wolf any more than he need a fox. But there are two singular stories about these wolves which I will tell, because they were told me by Jacques Cartier, and so I know them to be true.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST, then, as regards these wolf reports, very soon after I was born, my mother was lying with me on the terrace, and a large dog-wolf came up along the gravel path, looked at us both, and then trotted away among the flowers before my mother had time to scream for assistance. Secondly, Cartier left me out on the same terrace, lying on my stomach in the sun one day, and when he came back a she-wolf was sitting on her haunches watching me. At least so he swears. I have seen so much of wolves that I can, on simply scientific grounds, believe a great deal of them. These two stories I most implicitly believe; but with regard to our original connection with wolves, I have nothing whatever to

say. I only know that our neighbours at Fond de Givonne used to say, 'Don't say anything beginning with an L before a Schneider, or the conversation will turn on wolves.' And the curious thing was that there are hardly any wolves close to Sedan; you must go into the Ardennes for them.

I had but little education until I went to the Lycée; I was an only son, and I was what you English would call spoilt. My father and my mother taught me to read, write, and sum; and my father, who had a manufactory of wool in Sedan, told me that I should make a man of business if I would apply, and not go out so much at night. Dr. Tullier used to come and see me at this time (I was then eleven), and I rather wondered why, though I liked him. I listened once, and I heard him say,

'Let the boy have his own way; his mind has been abused by these superstitious old women.'

‘Meaning Madame?’ said my father with a laugh.

‘Yes,’ said the doctor, ‘and yourself also, and Cartier. You have let this wolf legend grow into the boy’s brain; you cannot get it out at once. The boy is a beautiful, well-grown boy, and I will not see him ruined by half a dozen old women.’

‘Shall I tell the priest?’

‘Lunatic! no,’ said the doctor, ‘that would be worse than all. Send him to the Lycée, I will speak to young La Rochejacquelaine. When did your boy run away last?’

‘Three days ago.’

‘Did he bring home anything?’

‘The old story—a wolf’s skin.’

‘Was Cartier with him?’

‘No,’ said my father; ‘he disappeared, and he came back tired and worn, with the fresh-flayed wolf’s skin on his shoulder and the little artillery carbine under his arm. It is very horrible.’

‘Not at all,’ said the doctor; ‘the little hero!’

Now all this was strictly true, and it was in consequence of these escapades of mine that I got the name of the ‘Wehr Wolf.’ I must explain to you how all this happened.

CHAPTER IV.

CARTIER was at the bottom of it all, and I was no more a wehr wolf than you are, though, thanks to my kind neighbours, I got the credit of being one. Cartier had been a Garde Champêtre, and knew very much of what is still the greatest forest in Europe, the Ardennes. Whether he ever assisted Mathilde in her smuggling I cannot say; but I know that very early in life he taught me the use of the carbine, and carried me over the frontier to the farm beyond Château Neuf, where his sister lived with her granddaughter Marie.

I suppose that the beginning of it all was this: Cartier asked my father if I might stay away for a week with him at the farm beyond Château Neuf, and my father had gladly consented. In this resulted the first

great journey of my life. Recall your own first journey, and you will sympathise with me in mine. I was now fifteen years old, and was at school at the Lycée in Sedan.

Our French Lycées are utterly unlike your English public schools. We have far more petty discipline, and far less liberty. The routine of our education again is completely different from that of yours and from that of the Germans. The Germans are forced to learn everything; the English learn anything they like; the French are forced to learn, but they are taught very little which is of any use to them. I can match any English boy I ever met in Latin and in mathematics, and can beat him hollow in history; but I never met a German boy who was not my master in really useful matters, such as geography, natural science, and modern languages. Why, German boys can—a great many of them—talk *English*. I cannot. Even now it seems to me a barbarous collection of mere arbitrary

sounds, and yet my German friends tell me that it is incomparably the finest language in the world, and that your poet Shakespeare is the finest of all poets for all time. Once more, neither English nor German seem to understand poets like Hugo and Béranger; they say that they are unable to rhyme. I think that the Teutonic races will never understand the Latin.

I have read much about Rugby and much about Eton. From my point of view, they must be absolute paradises. Eton, in particular, would seem to me more like the garden of the old man of the mountain than a place of discipline. There, they tell me, in a beautiful building, by a beautiful river, close to the greatest palace in the world, are eight hundred boys, who are actually forced to do nothing at all in the way of learning beyond simple class lessons, but who are forced to learn to swim before they are allowed to row in a boat. The story of Rugby, told by Mr. Hughes, reads like

an Idyl to me. There is at Rugby force, brutality, and, as he himself hints, vice. We have in our Lycées all three things. I suppose that they are everywhere; but we have very few masters who make friends of their boys as your English masters seem to do. Your punishments, too, are different, and not so degrading. You are flogged, we never are; you have impositions, so have we; but I would far sooner be flogged than be put *en piquet* for the whole hour of recreation. Your men of Trafalgar were habitually flogged. Fancy a boy of from fourteen to eighteen, nearly a man, being put with his face to the wall of the playground for an hour, in sight of his comrades (who all jeer at him), for one ill-considered word. I tell you that it makes boys desperate, and rebellious against all authority. For me, I would much rather be flogged like any of your noblemen's sons at Eton, and have the degradation over, than stand *en piquet* for half an hour. From what I learn, I

think that your English schoolmasters are the best of schoolmasters, though possibly not the best instructors. The Frères Chrétiens are very good instructors, but the worst schoolmasters ; they care nothing for boys with an opinion of their own, and we most certainly care very little for them.

The Lycée, then, do you perceive, is by no means such an agreeable place as your Eton. I hated it, and when Jacques Cartier called for me at four o'clock one summer's morning, I made a sort of vow to myself that I would never return to it any more.

My parents were both away at Metz, or, as I thought, I should not have got leave for my expedition, as they would have wanted me at home. Cartier gave a receipt for my person, and we immediately walked out to my father's château at Fond de Givonne, from which we were in no hurry at all to start, for we had many things to arrange. I had breakfast in the kitchen with the maids and young men, and they wished to

know where I was going, or whether I was going to stay with them. I had bound Cartier to secrecy, and so he confirmed me in the story that we were going to Château Neuf, and, probably, to Libramont. It was certain that we were going to those places, but where we were going after, that was our secret, and we kept it.

I was heir and lord of the family. If I had wanted anything, and it had cost fifty pounds, I could have had it from any tradesman in Sedan for asking, without consulting my father; so on this occasion I had no difficulty in getting everything I wished for. First, I told old Alice, our housekeeper, that I must have two hundred francs, and about that there was no difficulty at all—I wished that I had said more; then I got Louis, my father's favourite young man, valet and groom, to come up with me to my father's study, and help me to arrange for our journey. You will perceive that I did not take Cartier up there. There were reasons for

this. Cartier was a Norman of St. Malo (he said himself a lineal descendant of the famous Jacques). My father was more than half German, and although he trusted Cartier, he never would allow him any liberties. Now I was bent on rummaging and ransacking my father's study, and it was possible that he might scold in his mild way, which I did not want him to do; but I knew that if I could bring Louis in for part of the blame, little would be said; whereas, if my father heard that Cartier had taken his black beard into his study, he would be really angry. Consequently, I took Louis, or, to be more correct, Louis took me, for I sat on his neck, with my legs round his shoulders. Poor Louis! my heart is sorry for him as I write. I have seen him and his brother Alphonse strip themselves just as you do when you are going to bathe, and jump into the wine-vat together, splashing themselves up to the chest with the jets of the red juice. Louis

was stained with a deeper red before he went down at Ste. Marie. Well, this is little to the purpose, though, as a Frenchman, I cannot sometimes help thinking of the white feet which I have seen so often in the wine-vat turned up cold to the sky for ever. I beg pardon for this digression, but as a man of Champagne, the ruin of my country distresses me. We must submit; in fact, we have submitted, but, at least, let us have the sacred solace of lamentation.

Louis and I invaded my father's sacred study, and then he set me down, and we began our raid. The first thing fixed on was an English trout-rod. I have mentioned before that my father made voyages into your Yorkshire, in his business as a wool manufacturer. Well, there he learnt the art of fly-fishing for trout, an art unknown to us. He had partly taught it to me, and so I first desired his English rod, knowing well that no other one was to be got nearer than Frankfort-on-the-Maine, for

your English tourists never come our way. But now another want possessed me; I must have his fly-book, for we cannot even imitate your English flies. His fly-book must be in some drawer, and I opened one. There was a large paper lying on the top of everything, and before I could stop myself, I read:

[Copy.]

‘ M. le Ministre,—I have said all that I have to say. Alsace and Lorraine to Germany, but Belgium to France. I would be glad to know your ideas as regards tariffs in case of the new arrangement being made; but as it is, I am transferring the greater part of my property to Germany. I am utterly disgusted with the course which French affairs are taking, and decline to be nominated. I have but one object in life—to leave my only son rich, and to let him marry well. I shall do that best, I conceive, by putting him at the right side of

the border. My son develops French proclivities.—With high considerations,

‘GEORGE SCHNEIDER.’

I could not understand this at that time. I looked under it, and found the fly-book. I looked through it; the casting lines were all right, and I was safe with the rest of the paraphernalia which Louis had in his hand; rod, reel, casting lines, flies, were all right. So far for the fish. Next for the winged game. I could easily suit myself there. I took down my father’s breech-loading Le-fauchaud, and told Louis to look about for cartridges. Louis knew where they were, and found one hundred and twenty, that I considered would be enough and to spare. What next? why, I am sorry to say, that small document which I knew my father had, giving the permission of no less a person than the King of the Belgians for hunting in all his royal forests to the high-born George Schneider of Sedan. I was perfectly

aware that my father had this permit, and if I could have got hold of it, I fear I should have used it. I could not tell where it was. I consulted Louis, who would have done anything in the world for me.

‘Where is it again?’ said Louis, laughing; ‘why, here,’ and he pointed to the strong-box, let into the wall. I asked had he the key? and he said, ‘No, that the master had the key.’ I perceived at once I must begin life as a brigand, and really was not very sorry. The King of the Belgians had given my father leave to sport; if I was taken up I could explain matters. And when all was said and done, the French had joined with England in guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium. It was as broad as it was long. If we guaranteed their neutrality, a little poaching more or less was no matter.

The next thing I took was a splendid breech-loading carbine, sighted for six hundred yards. The cartridges for this

were not so easily found, even Louis was puzzled; but at last they were found in my father's dressing-room. I had now everything I wanted, and I went down to Cartier, Louis and I carrying the spoils, and found him just sitting down to his dinner. He pointed out to me that we could not start until we had dined, and so I had dinner also, among the servants; Alice, the house-keeper, presiding.

‘M. Valentin,’ she remarked, ‘is going to rectify the frontier of France; M. Valentin is going to push on to the Rhine.’

‘As why then, Alice?’ I said.

‘You have taken all the arms in the house, even down to the English fish spear’ (she alluded to the spike on the English fishing-rod).

‘We are only going to Château Neuf,’ I said.

‘I have been to Château Neuf,’ replied Alice, ‘but I never took two guns and a fish spear.’

I thought that it was wisest to get off without any farther argument, and so I told Cartier that we must be off—Madame Alice looking extremely black, when she had given me the two hundred francs.

Cartier, then a handsome man, a little over forty, carried the sac, the double-barrelled gun, and the fishing-rod; for my part, I carried the carbine only. But when we had got only as far as Givonne (just over the hill from Fond de Givonne), Cartier stopped me at an auberge, where singularly enough was his own wife (she was twenty years older than he was, they said), and she had two blankets strapped up *à la Prussien*, one of which she put round my neck, and said,

‘Pour le beau contraband
Qui marche a sa mort.
Les traiteurs dedans,
Et les Allemands dehors.’

The old witch left us after this, and I was glad of it. I wonder what could have

made a handsome manly fellow like Cartier marry such a creature. I asked my father once, and he said that the old woman knew too much, and that Cartier owed her money. We have no more to do with her at present. Cartier and I went out into the glorious Ardennes forest together, and all care was left behind. I fear I must become confidential here. I fear that I must tell you something about Cartier. We used to call him old Cartier, because we had known him so long ; but he was not forty-three when the day of devastation came on us. I must, however, speak more of his principles than of his personal appearance, or his age ; this handsome man, as fine a man as ever you saw—handsomer than any of you English —was wrong in his principles on one point. He declared that he was no poacher. He was no poacher on French soil certainly, but he had erected a theory that when you had once crossed the border, all morality was changed, and one could do as one liked. I

suspect, but only suspect, that it was by his poaching forays into Belgium that he got into trouble with that old witch, his wife, and married her to keep her quiet, but I cannot say. He had no children—I was the only child he ever had; and I regret to say that as soon as I could walk stoutly, and be trusted to run if required, he took me over the frontier poaching. When I was ransacking my father's study, you will observe that I was very anxious for the permit of King Leopold; in fact, I knew perfectly well where we were going, and I thought that we should be safer with it. It is useless to disguise from you that I knew that we should not be on French soil that night; but what did it matter to me? I had Cartier with me, and I loved him better than all the world, after my father and mother.

And let me be more confidential still. We French despise the Belgians. When we see you English, who have conquered India, and done many things, treating them

as equals, we laugh. You have guaranteed their neutrality, but even with you at their backs we could chase them like sheep to-morrow. Ay, beaten as we are, we could wipe them off the face of Europe to-morrow and make Frenchmen of them. Well, no. We could not do *that*; they are not fit for it. Judge then that Cartier and I conceived that we had as good a right to shoot game in Belgium as you English ever had to invade India. They call me, these cackling neighbours, a wehr wolf. Did I ever shoot a head of French game without authority? Never. Were I an English landlord I would prosecute every poacher at once. But circumstances alter cases, or you English, with all your purism, would not be masters of one-third of the globe now. After this preface of apologies for my first misdoing I will tell you how we fared.

CHAPTER V.

IT was a glorious August day when we left the open fields, and plunged into the great forest through a small by-path. I had been in the forest before, but never in this part of it. I was at once lost among the dense copsewood through which Cartier brushed, warning me to follow him at a little distance, lest the twigs should whip back into my face. He walked very stoutly for two hours, and said very little; at last we came to an open space in the forest, where the trees were larger, and then he sat down with me and talked.

‘Are you afraid, my darling?’ he said.

I laughed, and said, ‘No.’

‘Will you go with me wherever I shall take you?’

‘A Berlin, si vous voulez,’ I replied.

‘Are you afraid of your father’s anger?’

‘No, so long as you do not commit him to any indiscretion in my person.’

‘I will not do so, bien-aimé. But now, are you absolutely certain that you are afraid of nothing, and will betray nothing? The poor are very poor hereabouts, and the poorest make combinations, and I fear talk sad nonsense sometimes; for me I know nothing whatever about politics, I leave them to the Emperor. We practically pay the Emperor, and he, being a gentleman, will naturally wish to keep his place and his prestige, and earn his money. But there are some, my dear, who object to this rule, and would object to any other. Did you ever hear of the Carbonari?’

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘they were the charcoal-burners; they were great conspirators.’

‘Should you be afraid of them if you saw them?’

‘Not I. I should like to see them. My

father says that France will flourish under a Republic; so I cry always, 'Vive la République de 1792.'

'My boy,' said Cartier sadly, 'you do not know of what you speak. France is no more educated for a Republic than I am educated for Heaven. After two hundred years more she might be fit for it; that is to say, when she has got rid of the great curse of the Latin nations—that of lying. But it matters not; we sleep to-night with the Carbonari, and you are not afraid?'

I reiterated that I was not, and then we rose and went on, I walking with greater firmness because I felt that there was a trifle of danger in our expedition. You English had once a great man called Nelson, who, by his dexterity and valour, destroyed two of our navies—the first at Aboukir, the second at Trafalgar. I find that he was not altogether a hero; for at school he stole pears, and on the ice in the Arctic

regions he attacked a bear to get the skin for his sister. On the horrible day of Copenhagen, again, he disobeyed the orders of his commandant, won a great victory, and helped to drive the knife home to our heart. I will allow that there never was such a man before or since; but you English call him hero! Well, then, I will not dispute at all, not for one instant. I only say that he was only such a hero as Garibaldi; he disobeyed rules, and succeeded. I, for my part, am neither a Nelson nor a Garibaldi. I disobeyed rules and laws and the respectability of things, as did Nelson and Garibaldi, and so I found myself among the Carbonari. I confess that I should have liked to find myself anywhere else. Nelson was not exactly comfortable at Naples, though he had it all his own way; and Garibaldi was by no means comfortable at Mentana. *C'est tout égal.* I am only a Frenchman; that is to say, a man who has to give continual apologies, and so I

say that I was no more wrong in going among the Carbonari than Nelson or Garibaldi were at Naples. We had neither of us any more business in the Ardennes or at Naples than you English have in India or in Australia. Let he who is without sin among you saintly English cast the first stone at us French. You English are the greatest pirates on the face of the earth, with the exception of all the other nations. You English-speaking races have succeeded, while we have failed; you cannot say of us that we have not tried. Your successes are built on our failures; for example, who was the practical discoverer of your new republic, Australia? Why, no other than La Pérouse. You give us no credit at all; and since Sedan you say that we cannot fight. Our prestige is so far gone that I have actually, as a Frenchman, to make all these apologies before I can tell you of a poaching expedition over the frontier. I am no worse than others.

You English, I ask of you, Where are the North-American Indians? Where are the Maories? Where are the native Australians? Can you answer me? I think not. You sneer and say, Where are the Algerians? I answer that they are there still, as we know to our bitter cost in our affliction. Had Algeria gone to the English, the iron heel would have gone down on her neck, and it would have been a case of *finis Poloniæ*. Algeria was left for France; and I, as a Frenchman, appeal to you English as to whether or not she has been used well or ill. I think that no Englishman will dare to give me the lie here.

But we will discuss no more now. We are down again, and we must keep down, or we shall be ruined for ever and a day. I have only to tell you a plain narrative as to how these matters came about. If I talk politics, it is only because I think that every youth should know about them. At

the present moment the turn of you English is coming, and you must decide.

Cartier and I were together among the fern until the afternoon was far advanced, and the sun was only illuminating the very highest boughs. I spent my time in gathering flowers, and packing them away in a tin box, for the purpose of taking them home to dry them. I knew something of botany, and loved it; and I also knew something of entomology. I rambled about in the wood, and of flowers I got *Impatiens noli me tangere*, and *Colchicum autumnale*, not to mention several geraniums, and a fern which is rare with us, and rarer with you, *Botrychium lunaria*, which I found on a rock. Of butterflies I got some which would make your mouth water in England; for example, the Purple Emperor, which with us flies low, whereas you only get it on the tops of trees; the White Admiral, a fly very rarely seen with you; and, prize of all prizes, the Vancosa Apollo, a gigantic

white butterfly, with a peacock's eye in the centre of his wing—a fly which you English have not at all. When I got this last prize, I returned to Cartier, who was smoking at the foot of a tree. I showed him the Apollo and my flowers; but he was not at all enthusiastic. He told me to cast all that rubbish away, for that we had a very long journey before us.

‘Where do we go, then?’ I asked.

‘Possibly to Cologne,’ he answered, quite quietly.

‘But is not that the capital of Prussia?’ I asked, with that ignorance of geography which has cost our countrymen so much.

‘My pretty one,’ he said, ‘we are bound on a long and dangerous expedition. Believe one thing, that if you acquit yourself well your father will not be very angry.’

‘Does he consent, then?’

‘Could you have been here if he did not? But I have said too much already. Throw those flowers away, and we will go

sleep with the Carbonari. Bear yourself bravely; and remember this—any indiscretion which you commit will be visited, not on you, but on me. You are safe, I am not.'

'But, Cartier, my dear,' I said, 'why are you in danger?'

'Can I trust you?'

'To death.'

'Then I will tell you. I am a spy.'

'That is extremely charming,' I said; 'that suits me entirely. You are sent, then, to outwit the Prussians?'

'I am sent,' he said quietly, 'to gain information. I do not know what your father will say about my taking you with me, nor do I care. I think that you will be useful, and besides, I love you like my own son. You can go back now if you will.'

I said at once, 'I will go, and so long as I am not asked to lie, or to do anything dishonourable, I will stay with you to the

death.' I had read of Major André, and I thought that a bold and clever spy was one of the most noble of men.

' You see,' said Cartier slowly, ' this sudden *débâcle* of Austria at Sadowa renders it necessary that we should look to ourselves. The English are totally useless, they could not help us if they would. Prussia has destroyed Austria, and she may come to our doors next. Somebody wants to know facts about the Prussian army which he could never get from our rascally lying French press, and he has sent me. Somebody invests rather heavily in foreign funds, and so I suppose that somebody wants private intelligence.'

I nodded; I quite understood.

' You will rarely sleep in a house. You must lie out with me. You understand that?'

The delight of sleeping in the open air was so romantically pleasant to me that I begged him to say no more. He rose, we

shouldered our impedimenta, and I followed him through the wood upwards, until we came to a little spring which welled up through the grass at the foot of a large rock. I stooped and drank; and as I got up, Cartier put his hand on my shoulder and said,

‘ Will you follow that stream down ?

‘ Yes.’

‘ To the end ?’

‘ Yes ; but whither would it lead me ?’

‘ To Rotterdam.’

‘ But that is in Holland.’

‘ It is one of the springs of the Meuse,’ he said, ‘ and it leads you into a free country—a country which would perish under its own sea sooner than give up its freedom. Did you notice that little stream which we crossed when we first came into the forest ?’

‘ Yes.’

‘ That stream goes into the Moselle, and into German territory—into the territory of a nation who will barter freedom for

power. I think much, my beloved, and I am not sure whether I would be a Frenchman or a German; but see, when the wars come, the ruin all falls upon us who live on the watershed.'

We followed the trickling little burn down through the trees and the copsewood, until it formed a larger stream, swirling over gravel and lying in deep pools under alder stems. When we got to the first meadow I put down my pack, and took out the English trout rod, for the water was dimpled every half minute by rising trout.

'I can catch fish here,' I said, 'in the English-way which I have learned. Will you wait for me ?'

'I will go on to the charcoal-burners,' he said. 'Follow the stream down; if you are late I will come to you ;' and so he departed.

It was just the best hour of the day, and I put my tackle together very rapidly. I was perfectly sure of fish, and I used only

one fly, what you call a red palmer, though no monk I know of, not even in Belgium, is dressed in that peculiar red and black. I had not cast half-a-dozen times when I saw that whirl and splash in the water which every good fisherman loves; I had hold of a splendid trout over an English pound in weight. I kept him out of the weeds, and in two minutes had him gasping on the grass.

I went on with more and more success. I had my basket well lined with trout, when a circumstance occurred, which is not very pleasant for me to recall, but which must be set down nevertheless.

Coming to a long, rapid shallow, ending in a large pool, I saw fish rising on the shallow which were evidently not trout. I tried them with my red palmer, but they would not take. They *moved* to the fly, but it seemed too large for them. What these fish were I did not know, but I determined to have one of them; and taking

out my father's fly-book, I sat down to consider. I was in a deep glen, and only the tops of the highest trees were lit up by the sun. Opposite me was a cliff of broken slate, nearly covered with copsewood of oak, and, as I sat down, some of the broken slate rattled and fell down, but I took no notice at all.

I found a fly in my father's book, a very small one, which was marked 'blue dun.' I put that on, and threw over the heads of these mysterious fish; the very first one took, and when I had him on the grass I found that he was a fish I had never seen before—a *Thymallus*, a grayling. I had read that these fish smelt like violets, and I knelt down to smell him at once. There was another rattle in the crags on the other side of the stream, but I was so enchanted with my grayling that I took no notice.

I caught six or seven of these most beautiful salmonidæ, and then I heard the plunge of a great trout in the pool below

me. I changed my fly at once, and approached him with my old red palmer, determining that one or other of us should be master or man, and that I was not going to be the man if I could help it. Again the slate on the other side of the stream broke and fell, and looking up more carefully, I saw a large brown dog hidden among the fern.

I thought that it must be one of the charcoal-burners' dogs, and I cried to him, 'You go home, sir; you will catch it' (you will have punishment, in French); but he did not go, and I did not care, because I wanted my trout.

My trout rose like a gentleman, but he was too strong for me. He broke my line, and went in under an alder stump. I could see my line on the weeds, and I was determined to have that and, if possible, my trout. I stripped myself naked and went in, and, as I did so, the brown dog on the other side set up a terrific howling. I never

had as yet heard such a noise. It was like 'Loup, Loup, Loup, Loup-garou!' My attention, however, was fixed on my tackle and my trout. I followed my line until I got hold of my trout and threw him, a noble two-pounder, out on the grass. Then I knelt down, naked as I was, to look at him.

Sudden as the attack on La Chapelle, a pistol-shot went over my head, followed by a howl from the other side of the stream. I started up, all bare as I was, with my hands to my ears. Two horsemen were behind me in the gathering gloom, one of whom was wiping an American or English revolver with his handkerchief.

We French are quicker than you English. I apologised at once. 'You were not shooting at me, monsieur?' I said; 'and I apologise for being naked. I am a gentleman, though in my present state of costume it would be impossible to see whether I was or not.'

‘I did not fire on you, my boy,’ said one, in what I thought the Alsatian accent; ‘I fired at that wolf opposite. The beast was watching you, and without your clothes you would have been a dead boy in three minutes. Are you mad, or are you a wehr wolf?’

‘I am very much obliged to you, sir,’ I said, dressing rapidly. ‘I thought that it was a sheep-dog. Will you accept a trout from me?’

‘Potztauseud,’ said the other, laughing, ‘we must not take his trout; we must push for Longwy.’ He spoke in an odd kind of German, which I thought was Alsatian.

‘Parlez Français, s'il vous plait, mon Colonel,’ said the other. ‘Young gentleman, can you give us the route to Longwy?’

I replied that it was a very long way off.

‘I know,’ said the first man; ‘but is there no road through the forest?’

‘There is none,’ I said, ‘through which

you could drag a gun ;' for, do you see, I had seen our own artillery in practice, and I have lived to see six hundred guns piled together in our own trenches. Where you can get a gun you can get anything ; and so I used that form of speech.

'Little wretch !' said the more silent of the two horsemen ; but his companion said, 'By no means ; he has given a thousand pounds' worth of intelligence, Von Alvensleben. It will be utterly impossible for us to offer our right in these forests, without violating the neutrality of both Luxembourg and Belgium ; and as it will be equally impossible for them to offer their left, Saarbruck and Colmar are the words.'

'You need not talk before this little French boy,' said Von Alvensleben ; 'you were correcting me just now.'

And so they rode off ; and I was more than ever determined to go on with Cartier, because I was sure that, if we *were* spies, there were plenty of spies on the other side.

CHAPTER VI.

I CONFESS entirely that I was very much terrified by the sudden appearance of these two terrible Germans; they came on me so very suddenly, and looked so very dreadful against the sunset sky with their long blue cloaks. The pistol-shot, too, had startled me a great deal, and I was all alone and naked, with a wolf watching me from the other side of the stream. I had always heard of the Germans from my mother as men who spoke a barbarous tongue not pronounceable by French lips, who were utterly cruel in war, and who had assisted the English to destroy us at Waterloo late in the day. I had the strongest horror of the Germans at the time, although my own

father was one of them; and so I gathered up my fish, put them in the basket, and walked down the stream to rejoin Cartier, thinking, meanwhile, of all the stories I had heard about them. I learnt more when I got to school at Metz, but just now I thought more of what my mother had told me of them than what my father had.

My mother told me that they were a nation of wretches, and that the only one who was likely to be saved ultimately was my father, who was of Alsatian extraction. The English, she said, were most excellent people, but hopelessly stupid—only fit to fight after all hope of a scientific victory was gone, and so won battles more especially by sea. They were also Protestants, which was an objection. Now, my father gave me an entirely different account of the two nations. He said that the Germans were beating the French hand over hand in literature, art, and war; and that when our miserable Chauvinism was dead

and forgotten, the French would acknowledge it. With regard to the English, he said that so far from being the stupidest, they were infinitely the cleverest race on the face of the globe; that they had a small army recruited entirely by volunteers, but that with that army and with their tremendous navy they had annexed one-eighth of the human race; that the native army in India had recently risen against them, and that they had broken the back of the mutiny before one single company of reinforcement had arrived; that the United States, an offshoot of England, was the most powerful state in the globe; and that the English language—the language of the greatest poet which the world ever saw or would see—would soon be talked by 200,000,000 of people; that England was going to meddle no more in continental affairs, either with money or men, unless the road to India was threatened. In short, my father had a very far higher opinion of

you English than you have of yourselves. Our Chauvinism is bad enough; you see what it brought us to, and to what it is bringing us. But self-depreciation is still more dangerous than Chauvinism; it is an error on the other side. ‘M. Victor Hugo and M. Gambetta talk always of raising the country like one man,’ my father would say; ‘that is all nonsense. If the men are undrilled, or, still worse, unofficered, they are no more use in modern warfare than so many old women. The bravest will go to the front, and so you kill all your very best sires. We shall have a visit from these Germans some day, Marie’ (that was my mother’s name), ‘and you are a perfect fool; and you will give me a kiss, my darling, and we will go into the vineyard, for the Germans have not come. The revenge for Jena has not come yet.’

You may depend upon it that the *revanche de Jena* was very little out of my mind, and that I hated the Prussians pretty

heavily, and did not care much for the English. Well, these matters are altered with me now. I daresay that you cannot understand why. You never had a bullet lying against your femoral artery, driving you mad with agony. You never had Dr. Fuch's strong arm over your chest, holding you down in your bed, while Dr. Morton of London operated, at a time when one single error of the knife would have produced instant death, and when your own sweetheart, who had taken vows for a year, was holding the basin. No, you happy English know none of these things, but we do. *N'importe.* I know both Germans and English better now.

But at this time, do you see, I did not know much about the Germans, because I had only taken my mother's report of them; so when I came on Cartier, lying by a fire in one of the forest meadows, I was scared, and told him what I had seen. He took it very coolly, and held up before me a

wooden cross—a thing which I thought he must have taken from some grave.

‘Do you know,’ he said, ‘what that is?’

I said that I thought it was a cross from a grave.

‘It is the cross from many graves,’ he answered. ‘The Prussians are surveying the country, and this is a cross set up by their engineers on the top of yonder hill.’

Then I said that we ought to make for Metz, and tell the commandant.

‘We must see more before we talk,’ he answered. ‘Let us come on to the Carbonari.’

‘Had not you better take my watch from me?’ I whispered.

‘No, they will be perfectly honest with us,’ he answered.

It was dark night now, and we followed the glen down to one of the upper tributaries of the Moselle. The glen narrowed rather rapidly, and we had a dangerous place to pass. I was following Cartier very

closely, when he told me to be very careful how I set my feet. I saw that it was necessary: the stream was on our right, and a high cliff was on our left; the path, if such it could be called, between the cliff and the stream was very narrow and slippery. I had my English fishing-basket on my left side and my rod in my right hand. Cartier forgot about my fishing-basket, and passed on after his caution to me round the corner of the rock. I followed, forgetting my fishing-basket; when I came to the corner by which Cartier had passed, the fishing-basket struck against the rock and upset me headlong into the stream.

I cried out, and Cartier was in after me in a moment. I had only dipped my head, and had held my rod and my basket tight; but I was wet through. Cartier had only gone in up to his middle, and had saved the guns and the ammunition with which he was loaded, without one drop of water being on them.

When Cartier got me out on the grass, I first inquired about my fish, and we found that they were all right. Then I looked round, deadly cold as I was, and saw that we were among a crowd of persons, and, moreover, among a number of curious dull lights, the like of which I had never seen before.

The glen towered high all around us, and the moon was just rising above a tall wooded crag; but I cared nothing for the glen and nothing for the moon; these slow smouldering fires attracted all my attention. I said to Cartier,

‘What are they?’

‘They are the Carbonari.’

‘Not the people, the fires?’

‘They are the fires of the Carbonari,’ said Cartier. ‘The Carbonari are a secret people, and do their business in the great forest lands which divide nations. You are among them now.’

I saw it. I had read of the Chouans and

the Carbonari of Italy, and I had sense to see, in spite of my bitter chill.

To see what? That is easy to tell in our French way. In the two German officers I had seen heartless organisation ; among the Carbonari I saw heart, but no organisation. Well, you English laugh at us French because we are epigrammatical ; laugh on—any one can laugh at us now.

These people who crowded round me were not respectable ; they were far other than respectable, but they were very kind. I was shivering from head to foot, and a woman came up and felt my pulse.

‘M. Cartier,’ she said, ‘this boy has ague. He should have a warm bath, but you can get none within ten miles. The boy will be ill if he is not kept warm.’

‘I allow it, Mother Hortense,’ said Cartier ; ‘he must sleep with me. We have blankets here, and I can warm him with my body.’

‘He must go to his bed at once, Cartier,

and you are wanted ; we have much to speak of. Our young men have seen the German officers. Put the boy in the straw with my boy, and he can have his supper there. You have blankets for two ?'

Cartier had both the blankets, and the thing was easily arranged. I was to sleep with Hortense's son, my trout were to be cooked, and were to be brought to me in bed. A little difficulty arose : Mark, Hortense's son, was away, having followed the German officers through the forest, for what purpose it is difficult to conceive, for the two nations were in profound peace, and the German officers had as perfectly good a right to be here as they had to be in Paris. Mark thought, as he told me, that he would like to see what they were about, and, for my part, I did not wonder at it. I was taken into a hut, and put to bed by Cartier. Soon after that I had my supper, with some wine ; after which I got warm again, and fell asleep.

I was awakened by some one getting into bed with me. I asked, 'Who is that?'

'Mark,' said a voice I shall never forget in this world. 'Cartier and Mère Hortense said that I was to get into bed with you, and keep you warm. Raise your body, boy, so that I may get my arm round your back. You have had one of our chills.'

I did as he told me, and I fell asleep with my face against his, and with his feet twined in mine. O, my brother! O, my brother! by those white feet turned up to the sky, I ask you if we are never to meet again.

CHAPTER VII.

I AWOKE late in the morning, and looked around me as you see a fox look. My bedfellow was gone, and Hortense and old Mathilde were sitting on the ground looking at me. I turned without opening my eyes, and looked at them. They were strangely alike. I lay and listened, though I was still in pain.

‘Sister,’ said old Mathilde Cartier, ‘is the little dog awake?’

‘No, sister,’ said Hortense ; ‘he is asleep.’

‘If he was asleep for ever it would be better. Is he very ill?’

‘He caught the chill last night ; but my boy has lain with him and warmed him, so I think that he is better.’

‘You are a fool!’ said Mathilde.

‘Why?’ said Hortense.

‘Because, if you had the feelings of a mother, you would let me smother him quietly,’ said Mathilde.

I decided in my own mind that this event should most certainly never occur, and it never did occur. Hortense spoke again.

‘You are a very wicked woman, Mathilde,’ said Hortense; ‘you are a better hater than I am. I have more reason to hate than you have.’

‘Yes, because I have more spirit. You wanted spirit to kill him; could you not kill even his son? You have let your son sleep with his, and have brought back the warmth to his body—to a body which I would have sent floating down the river.’

‘Sister,’ said Hortense, ‘I have had revenge enough. If I have taken one child, I need not kill another; and I love both his children.’

‘ You love his children ! ’ cried Mathilde, furiously. ‘ Did he not pay you attention ? Did he not walk with you publicly at Metz when the Emperor came ? Was it not understood that he was to marry you ? Would it not have made a difference in our fortunes ? Did he not cast you over ? Should we be as we are now had it not been for his shameful usage of you ? ’

‘ That is all true, but I loved him,’ Hortense said. ‘ You do not know the truth. I could not have him, and so I stole his child.’

‘ I would smother this young wretch if I was in your place,’ said Mathilde, ‘ and let your own flesh and blood have its own.’

‘ You do not know the truth, sister,’ said Hortense.

‘ Mark is your own son,’ said Mathilde.

‘ He is the boy of my own bosom,’ said Hortense, ‘ but not my son.’

‘ If he was the son of my own bosom

I would see him righted,' said Mathilde, 'and I would smother this young cub in doing it.'

I sat up on my mattress, and said quietly,

'I don't see what you would gain by that, Mère Mathilde. Your intellects seem confused.'

At this moment a fearful fit of trembling, racking every bone, came upon me, and I sank back on the mattress ; the ague and fever were sharply upon me, and I was out of my mind to some extent.

CHAPTER VIII.

I WAS confused in my mind and in great pain for about a day and a half; then I had a long sleep, and woke up quite refreshed, and found that I was as well as ever I was in my life. These slight attacks of ague, which we have in our woods, are really nothing. I have seen a strong man on the march fall out, and have it over under the hedge, and catch up his company before the day is over, not a bit the worse. I have left the dinner-table with one of them, and come back again perfectly well before dinner was over. This first one was rather severe, and it is quite possible that I may have been a little alarmed and *tête montée*. On the second morning I got up, dressed myself,

and began looking to my sporting gear. I was busy at this when Mère Hortense came into the hut.

‘Mère Hortense,’ I said, ‘where is Mère Mathilde?’

‘I believe,’ she said, carelessly, ‘that she is at Thionville by now.’

‘At Thionville! that is quite impossible.’

‘Cartier told me that he had seen her at Fond de Givonne or Givonne—I forget which—and was on her way to Thionville.’

‘Why,’ I said, ‘she was here last night.’

‘It is strange that I should not have seen her then,’ said Hortense, kneeling before the fire, and blowing it up with her mouth.

‘Why, she was talking to you, and I lay and listened. I heard every word you two said.’

‘You have been out of your head, sweetheart. Our people are often deliri-

ous with ague. You were dreaming ; you will be as well as ever now, and you must travel to-day.'

She looked me so straight in the face as she said this, that I could hardly doubt her, and went on preparing for my journey. I determined, however, to ask Cartier, and in a very short time he came in and gave me 'Good-morning.'

'Cartier,' I said, 'you would not deceive me ?'

'No, my darling. Why should I ?'

'Then, was Mère Mathilde here last night ?'

'Certainly not,' he answered, emphatically.

And I doubted no more. I do not think that he would have deceived me. If I had asked had she been there the *night before last*, I should have got the truth from him. As it was, I came to the conclusion that I had been delirious ; and yet the dream of Mère Mathilde seemed so

wonderfully lifelike, that I could not make it out one way or another.

We had a hurried breakfast, and then we went out in the bright morning, while the dew was on the grass, and while the wooded glens were still bathed in shadow. Our mornings in Lorraine are so bright and pure, that they make old men young. I once was lying out after roe with an Englishman, and he said to me, 'Your mornings here are like those in Australia ; the air is like the wine of Champagne.' On such a morning Cartier and I started out into the Ardennes forest, with every vein in our bodies tingling with health and excitement.

The Carbonari were all gone—at least, only a few children, half naked, were playing among the wild-flowers in front of the huts. It occurred to me—I cannot say why—to ask the name of this place as we walked on.

Cartier asked why I wished to know.

‘I might wish to come again when you were not with me.’

‘Well, then,’ he said, ‘it is the “Bois des pas Perdus;” that is the only name which it has, and it is only known to the initiated.’

‘Cartier,’ I said suddenly, ‘did I ever have a brother?’

I asked it so suddenly, that he was taken by surprise, evidently.

He said, without a pause, ‘Yes.’

‘Did he die?’

‘Yes. He was killed by wolves at Petange in Luxemburg, in snow time, ten years ago.’

‘Why was he there?’

‘He was there with your father, who was going to Esche on an iron speculation, and then on to his estates in the Rhine provinces. And there was a terrible affray above Petange: your father was saved by some peasants who followed his carriage, but your brother was killed.’

‘Did they get my poor brother’s body?’

‘About as much of it as they would get of yours, if you were among the wolves in the snow, after they have packed—that is to say, nothing at all. There is a tomb to him in Petange churchyard. Now you know all about it, and you must ask me no more. If ever your father knows that I have told you so much, he will never let me see you again.’

We walked on in silence for above a mile through the open forest, when Cartier told me not to speak, a thing which was perfectly unnecessary, for I was thinking of my poor brother ; how dearly I had longed to have a brother ; how I would have loved him ; why my father had never told me of this hideous accident ; and of how my mother went yearly to Petange ; and how I had pleaded to go with her, and had always been refused. I say there was no need to bid me be silent, but Cartier’s command to silence made me look up. We

were in one of those dense bands of copse-wood which are the rule and not the exception in the Ardennes, and before us the path topped a little elevation, very narrow, walled by oak copse, and covered with bright greensward, with one small rock on the right-hand side. Cartier took me into the copsewood, and we lay down together in the high fern, on a carpet of lilies of the valley, some of which had thus early their reddening berries on them.

‘We must be here for some time,’ he said; ‘we had better have our *déjeuner à la fourchette* here.’

So we had chicken, wine, and bread, and we had finished quite a long time, when I heard behind us a low howl, ‘Loup, loup, loup-garou !’

‘A wolf,’ I said.

‘Not the real animal: it is our boy driving the roe-deer for us. Load your carbine and watch by the rock; we shall have a shot directly. This is better than

I thought ; hurrah ! the real wolves are up the wind. What a boy that is !'

As he spoke, the wolf-cry was answered from before us, up the wind, apparently quite near.

' *That*,' said Cartier, ' is a *real* wolf,' and he answered him with one of the most perfect imitations I ever heard ; then we lay still again, and Cartier whistled twice ; the wolf-call was repeated behind us. You talk of your English woodcraft, it is nothing to ours. At the second call, a splendid buck was standing before me on the top of the rise, within twenty yards, tapping the ground impatiently with his right fore-foot.

' Be steady,' said Cartier, and the caution was very necessary, for my hand was shaking. I fired just behind the shoulder ; the pretty beast stood stock-still for a moment, then he quietly doubled his knees, and fell down motionless, quite dead. I had shot him through the heart.

In my wild triumph I was rising to my feet, to look at my prey, when Cartier pulled me down, and put his hand over my mouth.

‘Be quiet,’ he hissed in my ear ; ‘be perfectly quiet, our boy is calling the wolves to the blood ; lie here, and load your carbine.’

I obeyed, intensely interested ; and as we waited nearly an hour, I may take this opportunity of telling you that this was the first wild animal I had ever killed. I used to give my father immense anxiety by going out all night with a carbine, and coming home with a wolf’s skin ; but, in fact, I had never seen one. I used to buy them from the Gardes Champêtres and the young men. I had a fancy for possessing wolf-skins, and I used to buy them from those who could shoot them, somewhere late at night ; this gave my father and Dr. Tullier the idea I had killed them, and my father had not the heart to in-

quire into the real truth; when I found that he thought so, my boyish vanity prevented me from undeceiving him. So the theory grew in my mother's mind—a fact which I did not know until long after—that I was destined to revenge my brother's death on the wolves. In the end of all things—in the general ruin, when the confessional was forgotten—Father Servi told me that my mother had consulted him on this point, and that he, not knowing what to say, had said nothing at all.

But Cartier and I lay there a long time in silence, and all this time the artificial wolf behind us kept answering the real wolf before us; the real wolf getting more and more to our left. ‘If he catches the scent of the blood first,’ said Cartier, ‘we shall have him; if he catches a whiff of us, we shall lose him. He will call no more now; I hope he has not got down the wind of us.’ And, indeed, *our* wolf behind us had left off calling, but I thought that I

could hear a rustle approaching us in the rear.

Cartier touched my arm, and I was still as a stone; for before us in the path, coming silently up, was a magnificent dog-wolf working steadily up to the dead buck. He was the largest wolf I ever saw; he stood as high as the table at which I write these words.

I wondered why Cartier dared whisper now in this awful stillness, when I hardly dared move to get my carbine ready, but he told me in my ear, 'He has his nose to the blood now, and cannot see us or hear us. It is old Motier of Audun la Romain, who disappeared two years ago. I knew he was a wehr wolf, and he made away with his own nephew about that two thousand francs; wait till he is opposite you, and fire just behind the shoulder-blade.'

The wolf came on steadily towards the blood which was trickling among the roots of the daisies among the grass; when he

was opposite to me I fired, as I thought truly, and he gave a leap in the air and lay motionless. At the same moment a shriek rang on my ears, and a figure dashed past me; before there was the least time for thought, I saw the wolf and a bare-legged boy rolling over and over on the grass in a death struggle. The wolf had his teeth fixed apparently in the boy's throat, and the boy was making fierce, wild stabs at him with a short knife. I saw that the wolf had been pretending death, and I saw that the boy was Mark. Cartier was on his legs with the fowling-piece at his shoulder, but, of course, afraid to fire. I caught sight of his *couteau de chasse*, and seizing it from his sheath, I dashed at the wolf, which had now thrown Mark over the body of the dead buck, and was apparently killing him, though I could see the firm brown hand which held the knife bringing blood at every thrust into the thick brown hair.

I seized the beast by the tail, and gave one stab on the ribs—a slight one. The wolf turned on me, and I met his eyes for one instant only; then they seemed to fall away from mine, and he lay down and died in good earnest.

Now, what account do you think that my dear foolish old Cartier gave of this affair? That the wolf had got Mark by the throat, and had nearly killed him. (The wolf had Mark by the *shirt*, and Mark was only *scratched* by his paws, and not *bitten* in one single place.) That I had missed my shot (the bullet injured the spinal vertebræ), and that the wolf was uninjured; that I had run in with his *couteau de chasse*, and had slightly wounded the wolf, scarcely drawing blood; but at the instant the wolf set his eyes on mine he had died. Such was Cartier's account. Mine is, that on flaying the wolf I found his back seriously injured, with ten stabs from Mark's knife, one of which must, I think, have pene-

trated the heart ; and my opinion is, that if Mark and the wolf had been let to fight it out together, Mark would have been little the worse. However, give a dog a bad name, and hang him. I was to be a wehr wolf, and so I must be.

CHAPTER IX.

WE all three stood looking at the wolf and the roebuck, and then Mark burst out laughing.

‘I led the old wretch on well, did I not?’ he said; ‘I have known of him this two years. By the bye, little master, I owe my life to you.’

‘Nonsense!’ I said.

‘Ah, it is always nonsense with heroes like you. You risked your life to save mine, and I well remember. Let us cut up our game, Monsieur will like the wolf-skin. Aha! my old man’ (kicking the wolf’s head), ‘I deceived you finely.’

‘It is old Motier of Audun la Romain,’ said Cartier; ‘he murdered his nephew for two thousand francs, but do not kick him.’

‘Old Motier,’ said Mark; ‘why, he was drowned in the Alsette, at Audun la Tige, smuggling.’

‘You think so, you young fool,’ said Cartier, ‘but I tell you that he was *loup-garou*, and there he lies.’

‘It is all equal if it pleases M. Cartier,’ said Mark, with his eyes very wide open; ‘but we will skin these beasts. I will take the wolf-skin to our people. M. Cartier, you are a good forester, will you do it?’

To ask Cartier to do a thing and to have it done were one and the same thing. He agreed at once, and Mark said,

‘Come you with me, and I will show you where to catch trout in your English manner. M. Cartier, I shall not come back. Some of our people are close here, and will be glad of such venison as you do not want; I will send them. Good-bye!’ And so he and I walked off together, I taking the fishing-rod and basket. We soon came to a small stream and sat down together, and

Mark put his arm round my neck, saying suddenly,

‘Why do I feel differently towards you than towards any one I ever met?’

‘I cannot tell, Mark; I feel in the very same way towards you.’

‘Little Monsieur, do you know where you are going?’

‘No.’

‘You are going to Germany, to learn German proclivities. I know your father is no Frenchman.’

‘He is German born,’ I replied.

‘Well, I will say no more; but do not be corrupted. Remain a Frenchman. Will you kiss me?’

‘Yes.’

And so my brother was gone. What passed before I ever knew he was my brother, time must tell. But nature seldom deceives one.

I must still carry you on my first great journey, because after this I made no journey

at all for nearly two years, except from Metz to Sedan, and back again. The time of my captivity was rapidly approaching, although I was unconscious of it. I was soon to be bound hand and foot at Metz, but I did not know it. I only know that I hate Metz to this day, and hope that the Germans may like it better than I did; as I write I laugh, I cannot at all help it. They have made Metz a *German* town; what would you English say if the Irish made London an Irish town? It would be quite as ridiculous. Here I am in my French way talking of Metz before the proper time. We always live now in the past or in the future, we French. We have no present; at least we will not accept it. *Enfin.*

‘Where now?’ I said to Cartier on the next morning; ‘are we to lie in the woods another night?’

‘Yes, and many,’ he said. ‘But I ask you one thing; dare you lie in the wood by yourself?’

I answered roundly, 'Yes.'

'You must do so then to-night for many hours.'

'Why?'

'I fear to trust you, my darling, in the work which I have on hand.'

'But, Jacques, you can trust me.'

'My boy, it is out of the question. You cannot personate. I have to personate. You might be known; you might commit some small indiscretion which would ruin everything. Be content, I will tell you all afterwards. As you love France, trust me.'

'I will trust you, Jacques, but tell me more.'

'We must walk very fast,' said Cartier; 'and your father's fortune partly depends on your discretion.'

'I will walk fast and hold my tongue,' I answered.

'Well, then, we shall cross the Luxembourg frontier in three hours.'

‘The Luxemburg frontier?’ I exclaimed, agast.

‘Yes, you do not know how far and how fast we have been walking. Do you see those two hills?’

‘Yes.’

‘One is Stomberg, the other Johansberg; both are in Dutch territory.’

‘But the Dutch live in Holland.’

‘Both those mountains are in Holland, however. English diplomacy will make Paris the capital of Denmark some day. They have the money these English, and they used to move the states of Europe as one moves chessmen. They guarantee this, and they guarantee that, because they have the power of putting an end to foreign commerce; but now we know that they dare not do it, because they would put an end to their own. My dear, we shall be in the dominions of the King of Holland in three hours.’

‘And what shall we do there?’

‘ I shall tell you when it is done. I shall go into Luxemburg, and return into France alone, representing myself as a Luxemburger. I shall thereby gain intelligence, most likely, so as to guide your father in his commercial speculations. It will probably be necessary for me to be arrested. In that case you must leave all our traps in the woods above the town, and make across the country to the Baths of Mondorf, where you will wait for me. I will tell you farther when we part. Mind what I say; *your father wants information, and I must get it for him.* In case of a *débâcle* your father might be half ruined, *and he does not want to be half ruined.* Now, come along, we must walk till the moon rises.’

There was no sporting that day, for the walking was all over high and uninteresting cultivated downs, always bending to the right of the wooded hill which the Dutchmen call a mountain, but which every one

else would call a hill—Mont St. Jean. ‘A fine country for cavalry and artillery, master!’ said Cartier to me once. ‘Those cursed English know how to defend their country better than we do.’ But towards evening we saw forests in the distance, and he was no better pleased. ‘These forests will help to ruin us,’ he said. In fact, he was in a bad humour, an odd thing for him. We came, late in the day, on an old peasant, who was ploughing his ground for clover; a little tiny strip of ground it was, with not a vestige of hedge between it and the nearest forest, three miles off. This peasant was very old and without any *spécialité*, unless one might say that a pocket-handkerchief would have been an addition to his toilette. Jacques Cartier arrested his ploughing, and asked him for the shadow of his plough while we had supper, to which he invited him. The old peasant of Lorraine was most pleased to sup with us, and we sat down under the shadow of his two horses,

which, as he remarked, gave more shadow than the plough would do; 'for,' he continued, 'it was without doubt that both the elder and the younger monsieur had remarked that the larger the object was, the larger was the shadow which it cast.' After hearing this magnificent French platitude, I felt sure that we were not yet over the border, even into Luxemburg. I was sure that I was still among the countrymen of Victor Hugo, and that Lorraine would remain French as long as the world went round.

As we sat under the shadow of the two horses (whose convenience was not, after the French manner, for a moment consulted), we ate sausage and bread, and drank wine. Cartier remarked to the old peasant,

'Badinguet keeps his frontier pretty open here, father.'

'And who is Badinguet?' said the old man, chewing.

‘The Emperor.’

‘Ah! the Emperor at Paris. Yes, I have heard of him. His wife is a good and pious woman, and I notice, Monsieur, that the wife has much influence over the husband; for me, I should never go to mass unless my wife took me.’

‘Would you go to a bull-fight with your wife?’ shouted Cartier.

‘If she made it a point,’ said the old peasant. ‘You see, it is necessary that women should be amiable for one’s peace of mind, and if contradicted they are unamiable.’

‘Would you vote as your wife told you?’ asked Cartier.

‘Undoubtedly. I should make a point of doing so. Had Monsieur the experience of women which I have, he would do the same.’

Cartier arose soon afterwards, and strode on towards the forest, about three miles distant. I regret to say that his language

during the next three miles was morally indefensible, and politically was sufficient to send a dozen such men to Cayenne. When we got into the forest he got cooler.

We pushed through more than a mile of the densest copsewood without a path before we stopped; at last I stumbled over a rock, and found that we were on rising ground. The place was such that I should fancy a murdered corpse might lie there without discovery during seven years, and only be found when the wood was cut at the end of that time. Here we were very busy; we hid everything away under piles of fern in different places, and then he made me a bed of boughs, fern, and blankets. After that we had supper, and then he rose to go with his pipe in his mouth, and he told me to follow him.

In less than a quarter of a mile we came on a potato-field, and he showed me a small village in the hollow below. 'That,' he said, 'is Petange, in Luxemburg territory.

If I don't come back to-morrow morning, go down there, and ask for Père Goton, at the Couronne d'Or ; tell him that you are nephew of M. Schneider, at the baths of Mondorf, and he will put your feet in the right way. Take this letter at the same time, and deliver it to Mademoiselle Charlotte, at Mondorf, and wait for me.'

I promised to obey. In fact, I liked all this mystery ; and as we went back into the wood again, I felt like one of your English Arthur's knights, with the delightful feeling on me that I did not know what was going to happen next. Cartier took me back to our lair in the wood, made me promise to lie down, and not sing or whistle ; and then told me that he was going down into the town as soon as it was dark.

'To what town?' I asked.

'To Longwy ; we are but a mile and a half from it.'

I lay down at once among the comfort-

able blankets and fern, and covered myself over. Cartier smoked for above an hour, until it was dark enough in spite of the moon. Then he came to me, and looked at my heavily-closed eyes, and listened to my heavy breathing; then he kissed me, and went away, pushing the branches of the copsewood, which glistened in the moonlight.

Then, like a fox out of his lair, I rose swiftly and silently, and followed him.

CHAPTER X.

THERE was danger, or he would have let me share his adventure. There was danger, and I would share it with him, whether he would or no. I was not going to see the man I loved best in the world going into danger alone; but what danger was it? What danger could there be in our own Longwy, 'the iron gate of France'?

As I followed him I made no noise. I was determined that he should not know of my following until it was too late to send me back. I thought that I had lost him once, for the boscage was so thick; but immediately after I crashed down over a rocky bank and lay in a rutted lane, rather bruised; but I lay quite still, for he was in the lane in the moonlight before me. He

thought it was a wolf, and I let him turn the corner before I got up.

I had to be very careful, for the moon was now bright. When I came to the corner of the lane where he had disappeared, I saw a town with high chimney-stalks below me, which was lower Longwy: above were long straight lines on the top of a hill, which, from my experience of Sedan, I knew to be fortresses. Keeping in the shadow of the garden and vineyard walls I followed Cartier closely and yet more closely towards the town.

Suddenly there came a bright flash of light from overhead, which I thought was lightning. I heard a 'roar,' or I should rather use an English word, 'bang.' It was the evening gun, and the drums and horns began their magnificent music in the citadel. I saw Cartier begin to run; the town was about to be closed. I ran also, but not quite fast enough to prevent my being entangled in a crowd.

Half a dozen pairs of red breeches were before me, with their accompanying white gaiters flashing in the moonlight, before I was aware that I was among the belated soldiers rushing in to drum call. I was beginning to laugh when I was seized about the waist by a strong arm, and looking round I saw that I was being carried along by a large chasseur, whose accent, if not his appearance, would have brought him to the guillotine were it a capital crime to be a Gascon.

‘Run, my pretty little rascal!’ he cried; ‘has heaven given thee legs for nothing? Run, then. Thou art of the Lycée, then?’

I said ‘Yes,’ with what breath I had left, not taking care to say that I was of the Lycée of Sedan, and that I was out as a spy on that spy Jacques Cartier, who was looking after things so as to be able to advise my father as to selling out all his property in France. I now suspected this strongly; but this was not the place to

speak about it. As we all, some forty of us, rushed at the gate, it was just being closed. I was bruised in spite of the care of my chasseur, but not badly. In the end I was inside the gate. Was Cartier in also?

Yes, he had come in on the end of the mob, and I saw him slinking away under a gas lamp. The soldiers soon separated, and having been kissed by the Gascon I was allowed to go.

I followed Cartier. Now for the first time I *knew* that I had been set to watch him. That my father to some extent distrusted him, but knew that I would tell him everything. Ah, father, you might have trusted Cartier as well as I did; indeed you might. He was more intensely French in sentiment than you were; but he was as true to you as to France. What was his worst crime? That of telling you that it was time for poor old France to prepare for the worst, and so save your money.

I followed Cartier. He went to the Café Cheval Blanc, and I peeped in after him. The place was filled with officers ; but Cartier sat alone with his back to the door, which enabled me to slip in without his perceiving me. The waiter came to me, and I had lemonade and cake put behind the back of our unconscious Cartier, who said nothing, but who listened to everything.

I cannot repeat the conversation of the officers. It was not good ; it seemed to me that their heart was not in their work ; and there was a bragging self-sufficiency about them which seemed to me quite different from all I had heard of the armies of the great Frederick or the great Napoleon, and more particularly different from that wondrous little army of you English, which has the most extraordinary *spécialité* of only being beaten on an average three times in fifty years, and of always winning in the long-run, as results show. I say

that I was not at all pleased with our officers, until a tall general officer in a scarlet cloak came in. I liked him.

‘Sit down, gentlemen,’ he said, as they rose. ‘Can any of you give me the route to Sierck?’

Not one, it seemed.

‘D’Estrange, you were born here—surely you must know?’ said the General.

‘Upon my honour, General de Failly, I do not,’ said D’Estrange.

‘Is Captain Rossel here?’ asked General de Failly.

‘Yes, he is quartered here, and is in the next room; but he is in bed.’

‘Call him,’ said General de Failly.

D’Estrange did so, and in a few moments I saw a sight which I shall never forget, and heard words which are burnt into my heart as by fire. An inner door opened, and a young man came out holding a candle in front of his face. The young officer had nothing on but a white shirt and

a pair of scarlet trousers, which he had tied tightly round his waist by his belt. His head was splendidly shaped, and he had enough of French dexterity to hold the candle so high over his head as to cast the shadows downwards. The immobility of his face would have done credit to an English midshipman, while being scolded by his captain on the deck of a frigate. I never saw him before or after, yet this figure in the scarlet trousers and the white shirt comes into my mind's eye whenever I hear his name.

‘Captain Rossel,’ said General de Failly, ‘can you give me the route to Sierck?’

‘Cross the Luxemburg frontier, and hold straight for it, leaving Mont St. Jean on your right, and when you make the Stomberg, you will see it at your feet on the other side of the Moselle.’

‘But I mean through French territory,’ said General de Failly.

‘O, miles round. This scoundrelly

neutrality of Luxemburg prevents us getting from one part of France to the other.'

'We propose to buy it.'

'But Prussia will not let you.'

'Well, I will not argue. I want to get to Sierck without going out of France.'

'You must go round,' said Rossel. 'Are we going to—you know, General—to respect the neutrality of Luxemburg in the next war?'

'Of course,' said the General.

'Then let us hope the Prussians will do the same,' said Rossel. 'I think, General, that you will find a German spy in the room now,' and Rossel pointed to Cartier.

CHAPTER XI.

CARTIER stood up at once, confronting Captain Rossel and General de Failly.

‘I conceive, General,’ he said, ‘that Captain Rossel is in error. I am no Prussian spy, but a good Frenchman.’

Rossel’s brows lowered. ‘Where were you last night?’ he asked.

‘In the forest,’ said Cartier coolly.

‘And what were you doing there?’ asked Rossel.

‘Serving the people.’

‘That is an answer entirely without sense,’ said Rossel.

‘Not entirely, Captain. You have served the people before now. In the Rue Picpus, for example.’

‘Do you make an accusation against me, then?’ said Rossel.

‘Not I,’ said Cartier; ‘but your conscience does so.’

‘This is a bold dog,’ said Rossel. ‘Ask him, General, to precise his accusation against me.’

‘Precise the accusation,’ said General de Failly.

‘I have made none,’ said Cartier. ‘The cit—I should say the Captain Rossel knows what I mean. We both love the people, we would die for the people; but he has denounced me as a Prussian spy. I demand that he retracts those words. I demand it.’

‘And how can you disprove it?’ said Rossel. ‘Where are your passports?’

‘I have none,’ said Cartier, advancing towards General de Failly and Rossel. ‘Hear me in private.’

As he went up to these two men I noticed that another man had risen from

his seat, and was standing behind General de Failly and Rossel. I did not see him clearly, but I thought that he was a handsome Jew, very eager and rather pale. I saw this man behind De Failly and Rossel. I sneaked up from table to table, until I was close behind them, Cartier never having seen me; and I heard this conversation.

‘I *am* a Prussian spy,’ said Cartier, ‘and I hold my life in my hands. But I am a spy on the side of France. My wife is a pedlar, and she goes to and fro. I am nothing, I equally go to and fro. We French are in horrible danger.’

‘He speaks well, this one,’ said Rossel.

‘No one will believe, no one will give credit to our danger. When I go to look on the danger, then I am called a Prussian spy by a friend of the people like Captain Rossel.’

‘I retract the words, then,’ said Rossel.

‘I think that you are right,’ said De Failly.

Rossel and General de Failly were standing in almost absolute darkness, with Cartier before them, and the mysterious man behind. Suddenly I saw two white hands part Rossel and De Failly by the shoulders, and I heard a voice which said,

‘Your name, then?’

‘Jacques Cartier.’

‘A good name, but Breton.’

‘It is not a sin to be Breton, Monsieur.’

‘It is little short,’ said the gentleman behind De Failly and Rossel. ‘Are you true to the service of France?’

‘Most true, Monsieur.’

‘To the death?’

‘To the death, Monsieur.’

‘You suppose that a great disaster is hanging over France?’

‘I know it, Monsieur.’

‘Suppose, now, that every conceivable evil was to happen to France,’ said the invisible gentleman. ‘Suppose that in consequence of our present rotten government—’

‘ My dear sir,’ said the General.

‘ Suppose,’ continued this gentleman, ‘ that Paris was taken and France ruined; what would you do then?’

‘ Die or be revenged,’ said Jacques Cartier.

‘ This is an estimable citizen,’ said Gambetta, coming forward. ‘ I would have him arrested for form’s sake to-night, and then let him go free.’

Cartier was therefore arrested and walked off, without observing me at all. When he was gone, I went to De Failly, Rossel, and Gambetta, and I addressed them.

‘ And who are you?’ said Rossel, smiling.

‘ A Frenchman,’ I answered.

‘ To the death?’ said Rossel.

‘ To the death.’

‘ What do you wish for, my little sir?’ said De Failly.

‘ I wish a pass out of the town, and I wish the freedom of Jacques Cartier.’

‘ Are you republican?’ asked Gambetta.

‘No,’ I answered, ‘I am Orleanist; but before all I am French.’

‘Will you not go to bed, my brave boy?’ said Gambetta.

‘Yes, to my lair in the wood,’ I answered. ‘Let me out of the town; I have work on hand for France.’

‘What have you to do for France?’ said General de Failly.

‘Sir,’ I answered, ‘nothing, except to tell grown men the truth. Seize Belgian and Dutch Luxemburg, and save France.’

‘This is a strange boy,’ said De Failly.
‘Where do you come from, boy?’

‘Sedan.’

CHAPTER XII.

THIS chapter is rather a short one. Gambetta, Rossel, and De Failly took me outside and handed me over to the guard, with particular instructions to see me through the gate, and with promises that Cartier should be released early the next morning. My last words in Longwy were with Gambetta at the gate.

‘My boy,’ he said, ‘will you have a soldier to see you on the way?’

‘No, sir,’ I said; ‘I know my way well, but please let Cartier out to-morrow.’

‘I will ask De Failly to bully the mayor for you,’ said Gambetta, ‘you poor little innocent; we are dragooned to death in this old France of ours. And so you are not a Republican?’

'No, sir,' I said promptly; 'we are not fit for it.'

'Perhaps not,' said Gambetta thoughtfully. 'But we do not know; had Washington spoken as you have spoken, where would the United States have been now?'

The drawbridge was lowered for me, and I sped away under the twinkling stars towards my lair in the woodlands above Petange. Yet I was scarcely across the drawbridge when I halted and looked back, to see the last of Gambetta. He stood under the light by the guard-house, with his hand to his head, thinking; then he turned and walked slowly back under the arch, and was lost to my sight.

Let us think for a little, young English gentlemen. I am a Monarchist, and for that matter an Orleanist, yet I consider that Gambetta is one of the greatest and noblest of men which France has ever produced. Our peoples, our own French, have taken it into their heads to laugh at him. I hate

his politics, and think him politically a fool, but what does that matter? Look at the man and what he has done. He rallied all France, until our conquerors began to respect our raw levies; he roused all France; it was too late, but was that *his* fault? He was ignorant of war, yet his rabble checked the unconquerable Germans before Orleans; only certainly to be thrown back afterwards. I confess that we were utterly ruined, no Frenchman would deny that. I confess also that we might have had better terms had it not been for Gambetta; but I wish you to put yourselves in our place for a minute.

Suppose that your fleet was ruined; suppose that three hundred thousand men were in Surrey; suppose that London was locked up from the outer world, and was given up to starvation, banded round by an impregnable army. Suppose, then, also that your Queen had fled to America, and that you had no government with which a

foreign nation could treat. Suppose, in fact, that London was in the state of Paris the winter before last. What could you do? I am unable to say. *We* sent a young lawyer out in a balloon to raise the provinces. It was entirely useless; you cannot make trained soldiers in a day; but Gambetta did his best: no man, in fact, ever did better; he got together three hundred thousand men (not soldiers), and made them fight after the fashion of civilians. His armies were overpowered; he was ignorant of modern war, he stuck to the traditions of the early revolutionary wars; he imagined that a nation could be raised to face modern arms. Gambetta has seen his folly by now, but his name should be a great one in France as long as France lasts.

What, we are dead, are we? Yes, indeed! Quite so! For my part I do not think that we are quite dead as yet. I am not dead yet, in spite of that sausage which Mère Hortense gave me at Longyon. I

think that you will hear of old France again. *Sept douleurs!* It maddens me to hear France spoken of as dead, and Gambetta sneered at by fools, who never did anything in their lives except cackle and lie.

CHAPTER XIII.

You might as well ask a roebuck to observe the Ardennes frontier as Cartier. I wonder very much how our pedlars manage with regard to passports ; I strongly suspect that they can manage entirely without them. Knowing this, I was perfectly certain that the moment he was released he would follow me at once, and that there would be but little trouble. I went to our lair in the woods, and took my carbine and a game bag, which I filled with necessary things, and then I went down into Petange.

I had no difficulty there, for I said simply who I was and that I was wandering, desiring to get to Mondorf. The landlord was more than kind, he was deeply interested in me. How was my mother,

and how was my father? Would I like to see my brother's grave, while Madame got breakfast? I thought that I would like to see my poor brother's grave, very much indeed; and so we started out, and very soon stood against a tiny stone cross in the churchyard.

‘Here he lies then?’ I asked inquiringly.

‘No, Monsieur, not a vestige of your brother's body, or a relic of his death, was ever recovered save one.’

‘And that my mother has,’ I said carelessly.

‘Pardon, Monsieur, my wife has it, and has always kept it concealed from your mother during her many visits.’

‘What is it?’

‘It matters not what it is, Monsieur; I will give it to your father without a word, should he claim it, but we will never give it to your mother.’

‘I will take it to my father, if you like,’

I said. And the landlord thought for some little time.

‘Will you promise not to show it to your mother?’

‘I will.’

‘Then come with me.’ He took me back to the inn, and up to his bed-room, where out of an old oak press he took an envelope, which he carefully sewed into my waistcoat, I submitting with perfect quietness, but most fully determined to unsew it and look at it the moment I had an opportunity. Then I had my breakfast, and offered to pay for it, but he would not let me. I got him to show me the road to Mondorf, or rather the direction of Mondorf, and then I started across the hedgeless fields towards Mont St. Jean, skirting the frontier, and feeling rather lonely without Cartier.

I soon saw that I was watched, and by a friend too. I saw a swift figure lurking wherever it was possible and beckoning to

me to go towards, as I made it out, Mont St. Jean. I did so, and no sooner was I in the copsewood, than I heard a laugh behind me, and turning, I saw Mark, bare-footed and bare-headed.

‘Here we are, safe and sound; Cartier is free, but we must dodge and skulk till you and he are through Luxemburg, you must not be seen for fifty miles now. How I wish I was going with you!’

I was so glad to see him again; I never loved any one as I did Mark, I think. I asked him what we were to do.

‘Skulk here,’ he said, ‘for a little while and watch; come higher up the hill, and we can peer through the trees; but we must not get as high as the chapel, or at least, I must not.’

‘Why not?’

‘Because of the Prussians.’

‘But we are in Luxemburg territory.’

‘Ay, but the garrison of Luxemburg is Prussian. See, there are four of them

in the field measuring; may the evil one take them!'

Mark was enthusiastically French as Cartier, and a German could do no good; most certainly there were four German officers in the plain, below us, but they were not measuring anything, but apparently out for a ride, and coming straight towards us; evidently making for the road which led up to the chapel at the summit of the mountain.

'Mark,' I said, 'they are making for the top of the hill. I will go up to the chapel myself, they can do nothing to me. Keep my carbine and wait here.'

He took it from me, and I began climbing. Those who have climbed Mont St. Jean know that the side towards Petange is heavy work, alternate belts of copse-wood and *gazons* of slippery turf. I made good weather of it, however, and was at the chapel on the summit before I heard the Germans come toiling on horseback

up the stony ride which led to the summit.

Suddenly a gunshot rang through the wood, and there was a splintering of stones and a plunging of horses, followed by laughter; the four Germans came clinking up the hill out of the wood, and then drew bridle before me. I was lying at the chapel door perfectly *insouciant*; though with my heart beating pretty fast, for I saw before me the two officers whom I had met when I was fishing in the Ardennes.

‘ You had a narrow escape, Von —,’ said one to the other. ‘ These Luxemburgers are no jägers. That shot missed the bird entirely.’

‘ Blitz, yes, but it has gone through my coat,’ said the other officer. ‘ If the wood had not been so thick, I would have hunted the careless fellow down and boxed his ears for him. You say the bird; did you see any bird, then, at which he could have shot?’

‘ Why, no, friend,’ said the other officer, ‘ that shot was fired at you.’

‘ A man can only die once,’ said the other German officer. ‘ These Luxemburgers are French at heart. Let it be, it is not worse than Ireland after all. And we guarantee their neutrality, do we?’

‘ We must stick to the letter of the law,’ said the other officer.

‘ Confound the letter of the law,’ said the first officer. ‘ What letter of the law warrants England in keeping Gibraltar? and yet an English minister who would let it go ought to be hanged on the highest tower of Windsor, and left to rot there. What right has Luxemburg to exist? are we to respect this tag on the Dutchman’s breeches?’

‘ We had better be on the right side,’ said the second officer.

The first officer grunted. ‘ It is better, but suppose your fine man of the 2d of December (a matter for which I honour

him) is not loyal, and violates this dirty little strip of territory; what then? He is not very scrupulous; he has bought up England by a commercial treaty, so he is safe at sea. Suppose, I say, that he was to play us that trick; what should we look like?

‘Fools,’ said the other German officer. ‘But the king would never allow it.’

‘Then the king is a—most Quixotic man,’ said the second officer. ‘Are we, when the time comes, to lose 200,000 men because we must march on Sierck instead of on Sedan?’

‘It seems so,’ said the other. ‘But we hold Luxemburg.’

‘Well, that is good,’ said the second officer; ‘that is a nut to crack, at all events. Ha! ha! Good luck to Luxemburg. Why, here is our little trout-fisher on the steps of the chapel.’

I must call the attention of the very youngest readers to these facts. At this

time there was a Prussian garrison in the neutral town of Luxemburg, and the Prussian engineer officers were at work to make it stronger than ever, with outlying forts. Luxemburg is the key to France, and most nations would have fought for it as you would for the only place in the world which is stronger, Gibraltar, the key to the road to your Indian empire of 120,000,000 souls. Soon after I heard this conversation between the two German officers at Mont St. Jean, rather strange things happened. The Emperor of the French, consulting no one, offered to buy this fortress from the King of Holland. I must say that a deadlier insult was seldom offered to another nation than this from France to Prussia. Mutual friends, however, stepped in, and Prussia gave up the fortress without a blow, on condition that it should be dismantled, that is to say, that the Luxemburgers should spend a million of money on a destruction which never could be done, and which

never will be done. We ask now, in this midnight of French humiliation, why a kingdom like Prussia should have submitted? The answer is easy. Our prestige was terribly great at that time. We had done well in the Crimea; we had beaten the magnificent army of Austria like an old sack; Europe seemed to hang on our hands, and every one, you English included, was afraid of us. Prussia yielded because she was *afraid*; let them dare to say otherwise. If they were not afraid, why did they cut down the trees on the glacis of Cologne? It is pitiable and horrible to see how we deceived ourselves, but it is almost amusing to see how we deceived the Germans. We knew nothing, our newspapers and our officials always lied, and the end of it was that the Emperor himself was deceived by his creatures, and went to war with 380,000 men against 1,000,000, in hopes that the South German States would join him. The end came, as you know, but not before some

very long-headed men, including my father, had learnt something about the temper and resources of Germany, and made themselves safe. Before we gave the old King of Prussia the last cruel insult about the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern for Spain, my father's money was mainly moved into the Rhine provinces, to Amsterdam, and to London. My father's subscription to the last French loan was only 8000 francs.

But I am here at the chapel of Mont St. Jean, before the two German officers, who spoke to me in German. I did not choose to remember that language to-day, and I wished to see if they remembered that I could speak it at all. They apparently did not, but spoke to me in French.

‘Hah ! my little Frenchman,’ said one —the one I have called the second officer. ‘Come here to me, if you please.’

I came to him ; he caught me by the back of the coat, and lifted me into the saddle before him.

‘Now, my boy,’ he said, ‘you will sit there. What is the name of your friend we saw hiding down there, in the wood with a gun?’

I was so taken aback that I said, ‘Mark.’

‘Ah! well, do you see that if Mark shoots at us again, he is as likely to hit you as any of the other four.’

I was only a boy, and could not hold my tongue. ‘He cannot fire again, for I have all the cartridges,’ I said in my folly.

‘It was Mark who fired at me, then,’ said the German, laughing.

I turned frankly to him. ‘I cannot think it possible,’ I said, ‘but he is a wild boy out of the woods, and I know nothing of him. You cannot believe, sir, that I connived at such a thing?’

‘Little trout-fisher, no,’ he said, ‘your face is your passport. Tell him to take better aim next time.’ And when we came out of the wood he put me down, and the four rode away towards Luxemburg, leav-

ing me standing like a fool in a potato-field.

Mark was beside me as soon as they were out of sight. 'You shot at that man,' I said angrily.

'Indeed I did not,' said Mark eagerly. 'I was *aiming* at him, and thinking how nice it would be, and the infernal arrangement went off in my hands; I swear that is the truth.'

And so I was obliged to accept Mark's explanation.

CHAPTER XIV.

‘Now the route!’ I said to Cartier, when we started after our next meal. ‘Where shall we go next?’

‘Nowhere,’ he said, rising up and preparing to walk. ‘A long way, but to nowhere to-night.’

‘We sleep out again, then?’

‘We sleep out many times. There will be danger to-night again.’

‘I love it,’ I replied.

‘Then you will have it. But we must have game; and I think I know where to get it. We’ll now cross the railway here. We are going into France again. Dost thou hear?’

I followed him over the railway, and we seemed perfectly unobserved. After

pushing through the forest, we came into an open patch of potatoes and buck-wheat, and at his advice we took our shot-guns. We had not walked twenty yards when a pack or covey of hazel grouse rose before us, so close that you could not see between them. We both fired, as you would say, 'into the brown,' and we brought down two brace and a half. This was on the south side of the wood, where the birds were wild. When we had picked them up, and deposited them in our game-bags, we turned back through a narrow belt of woodland, and Cartier told me that we must 'stalk' very cautiously. We did so, and at last I saw daylight between the trees. We crept on; and then Cartier showed me a little square of barley, which had not grown clear to us within twenty yards.

'Do you see,' he asked in a whisper, 'that little brown patch about twenty-five yards off?'

‘Yes.’

‘Let us fire into it together. Take good aim, and run with me.’

We fired together, and then ran. We had killed ten partridges, two flew away, and another ran into the wood. It was rare sport. I hear that you English always make them fly before you shoot them. That is a great *bêtise*. You should shoot them as we do, sitting, at least if you have such a chasseur in England as Jacques Cartier; for me, I do not think you have.

‘This will do,’ said Jacques. ‘Now we will have an excuse for anything. Let us walk now as we never walked before.’

Twilight came, and then darkness. We were walking and talking very pleasantly over a smooth field, when we came to what seemed to me a large rose-garden, as indeed it was. We passed to the left of this, and I observed a mass of trees to my right level with us. I thought that we were in perfectly flat country; everything

was level as far as I could see, and there was only one light—the light of what seemed to be a large café in front of us out on the plain. At once I heard the sound of two horses approaching us.

Jacques Cartier said, 'Be silent and firm; speak only in German.'

The two horsemen came slowly on until we stept aside. Then one said, 'Whom have we here?'

'A young gentleman, sir, going to school at Trèves,' said Jacques readily.

'You are a Frenchman,' said the horseman.

'Yes, sir, I am the gamekeeper of his father, a worthy gentleman, M. Schneider, who has estates at Pont à Mousson.'

'What have you got on your shoulder?'

'Game, sir. May I?'

'Yes,' said the jolly outpost. 'Leave a brace over at the café yonder with Mademoiselle Marie Cartier. She and I are what you would call *au mieux* together.'

Tell her they are from Private Ringersdorf, her lover.'

Cartier caught hold of my arm. 'You are too old, and she is too young, for you to be her lover,' he said.

'You are right, my Frenchman,' said the German. 'She is but thirteen, and I am thirty-five. Yet she is like my little daughter Gretchen away there in Pomerania, and I love her.'

And so they rode on. I, for my part, loved the rough German from the way he spoke of Marie Cartier. I thought it so good that he should love the child because she was like his daughter. Cartier, however, cursed him for an impudent German, and then said to me,

'You must go in there alone, and you must stay there all night. Find out if this Marie he speaks of is my niece or not. You must be no one, and know nothing. You must meet me to-morrow at the Toison d'Or, at St. Pierre. Any one will

give you the route. Mind you be cautious.'

• But where are you going?

• Right down over the cliff into the lower town, by a way I know. It is dangerous. I have done it before, but not so heavily laden as I am now. Go in, listen to everything, and say nothing.'

• But over what cliffs are you going? I asked. • There are no cliffs here.'

• The most inaccessible ones in the world,' he said. • I have to go down them, with a chance of being shot by these infernal Prussians, to get to our own people at the Cheval Blanc, in the lower town. Remember what I am, and where we are.'

• But what are you? and where are we?

• I am a French spy; and we are on the glacis of Luxemburg.'

CHAPTER XV.

I APPROACHED the café quite boldly; what had I to care for? It was an adventure, or seemed likely to end in one; and that I loved. If there was no adventure, I was determined to make one; and indeed I did. I fell in love.

You will allow that that is something of an adventure, I think.

I had partridges on my shoulder, and I went in. ‘Holla, messieurs et mesdames,’ I cried in French, ‘who will buy partridges and hazel hens here, then?’

‘Here is a pretty little Frenchman,’ said a Brandenburg hussar. ‘What price are thy partridges at, then?’

‘Luxemburg a brace, and South Belgium for the lot,’ I answered, ‘always ex-

cepting one brace for Mademoiselle Marie, the neutrality of which is guaranteed by England.'

There was a roar of laughter at this joke. I notice that it is not very difficult to make Germans laugh at political jokes. They get very few at home. In fact, the Germans are by no means smart at political jokes: even *Figaro* and the *Petit Journal pour Rire* can beat the German at political jokes. Your *Punch* stands supreme in Europe as regards both social and political jokes; but your *Punch* is an exception. The Germans are far wittier on social questions than we are, but in politics we can beat them hollow. Why? Because we tasted a freedom in 1789, the taste of which has never gone out of our mouths. You may imprison Rochefort and shoot Ferré; but, with all our faults and follies, we will speak the truth in Europe—at least as *we* see the truth. There is one thing you can never do, try you ever so hard—

you can never stop the tongue of a Frenchman or a woman.

Now here were these honest Germans in this *café* on the *glacis* of Luxemburg. The least educated among them knew far more than ever I was likely to know. The smallest drummer-boy there might have thrashed me; yet suddenly with my French wit I was master of them all, by the mere power of repartee.

‘Suppose, then,’ said the Brandenburger, ‘that we seize the brace of partridges destined for Mademoiselle Marie. What will England do?’

‘She will send her ironclad fleet up the Moselle to Metz,’ I answered; ‘nothing is impossible to her. One of her lords, before the Crimean campaign, proposed to send her fleet into the Caspian Sea.’

A geographical joke always takes among the Germans, next to the English the greatest geographers in the world. This one took, and there was another roar of laughter.

‘But suppose,’ said the Brandenburger, ‘that we chose to invade England, and conquer her?’

‘That would be no doubt possible,’ I replied. ‘In fact, the great Napoleon had some idea of doing so; but after Trafalgar he did not see his way to it, and turned on you Germans as the easier prey. You know the result.’

The Brandenburger got sulky. I wished him to be so.

‘We won Waterloo,’ he said.

‘The greatest mistake in the world,’ I said. ‘The English, with their raw levies, won Waterloo. The English troops who beat us out of Spain were never at Waterloo at all; they were in America.’

‘It would have gone hard with the English if we had not come up,’ said the Brandenburger.

‘I doubt that,’ I replied. ‘Wellington never lost a battle or a gun. He had done

better at Waterloo before six o'clock on the 18th than ever you did at Ligny.'

'We had Napoleon against us.'

'So had Wellington. Napoleon looked at your army, and beat them. He never saw the English army but twice, and in both cases he was defeated.'

'You are fond of the English army since the Crimea,' said the Brandenburger.

'And before,' I said. 'They have systematically beaten us, as we have beaten you.'

'We may beat you yet,' said the Brandenburger.

'It is possible, but not probable,' I said. (O, if I had dreamt of what was going to happen to us!) 'But this is not the question. Who is going to buy my partridges? German money not taken. Neutrality of one brace guaranteed by England. In case of any dispute arising, I refer the matter to the arbitration of Lord Derby, the President of the United States, and Mademois-

selle Marie.' I felt a touch on my arm, and I turned and saw her. It was all over at once; the boozing Germans might go home.

Go, honest, hard-fighting, hard-thinking, honest fellows, go your way; leave us to go ours; there is room enough in the world for both of us. Make love in your own way, if you like; but read from *Romeo and Juliet* by our French lights. You are slow and sure at your love-making, and you assert that you understand Shakespeare better than we do. Possibly; yet do you understand Romeo and Viola as well as we do? I think not.

You dull northerns, you cannot understand your own Shakespeare. With us, some brilliant spark in early youth leaps from one soul into another, and burns there for ever. In one instant Romeo is in love with Juliet, and death alone can part them. It was so with me.

I turned and saw my fate: a little girl,

wonderfully beautiful, with large blue eyes, and blonde hair falling down over her shoulders. She turned her face to mine, and said, ' You are Valentin ; ' and I said, ' You are Marie. '

It was all over. I had seen my love. I was not much like Romeo, for my hair was tangled and my face brown, and the blood of the partridges had stained my shirt ; yet I had found my Juliet.

I tell things too fast ; yet you will see that just now I mentioned Romeo and Viola together. Put me as Romeo, and then understand, if you English *can* understand, that I had not found my Juliet, but my Viola. My darling is not Juliet, but Viola.

O, my pretty love, my innocent sweetheart ! where should I have been without thee ? In the horrible midnight of disaster at Sedan, where one's heart was burnt to ashes, who was that pretty boy who tended me so faithfully, and who helped the brave Englishwoman to carry me out of the flam-

ing Bazeilles? Was it my own wife, my little bride of sixteen, dressed like a soldier of the line? I think it was she.

But it was on the glacis of Luxemburg that I saw her first, and I kissed her; and I heard the Brandenburger say, 'Habet!'

CHAPTER XVI.

BANG went the gun from the bouc down below our feet, and there was a general clatter of sabres and bayonets. The Prussians were going, and had to go very fast; they had been sitting here drinking and amusing themselves until the last moment, and if one of them was too late for the raising of the drawbridge, he would, as you say in England, 'catch it.' What would be the pains and penalties inflicted on a young man who was left outside the fortress all night, I cannot say.

I am quiet again, and I can resume; the affair understands itself quite well. I

am a Frenchman, and can argue with any one. I will argue with you, although my argument goes against the French. If the French had submitted to discipline as the Germans do, and as your English young gentlemen do, this disaster could never have occurred. However, I argue like this: if our officers and our men had attended to discipline as the Prussians did, we might have won.

The Prussians dashed out of the room, and I was left alone with Marie. A certain kind of Frenchman, like a certain kind of Irishman, never hesitates in love or war. I was one of these Frenchmen; I had not exchanged twenty sentences with Marie when I asked her to marry me. She at once consented, and, in fact, we are married now; but that is of no moment at all, at least not for the present. You will perceive that I imitate the manner of the inimitable M. Victor Hugo in telling my story, but I am crippled, because he has

the latitude of fiction, whereas I am bound down to the inexorable laws of fact. I can only say that in style I copy M. Victor Hugo, the great master of prose in this age, in the passage that follows.

We were alone, and I kissed Marie once more.

‘ You will marry none but me?’

‘ None.’

‘ There is blood on your shirt,’ she said; ‘ is it *sang des Prusses*? ’

‘ It is *sang des perdrix*,’ I answered.

‘ You joke, you make *calembours*. Lay down your game and let us walk.’

‘ Whither?’

‘ Through all the world, but at present on the *glacis*. ’

‘ And Mère Hortense?’

‘ She is asleep.’

So we innocent children stole out, leaving Mère Hortense asleep behind the buffet, and we went on hand in hand.

By the rose-garden.

By the little cross which marked the place where the officer fell in the duel.

Past the old cemetery.

Past the little auberge of Madame la Tige.

To the drawbridge.

A gentle whistle from Marie caused it to be lowered in a minute; and then

Past the Cheval Blanc.

Past the Hôtel de l'Europe.

Past the post-office, the gaol, the barracks, the convent; and we were in Luxembourg.

(Here follows a long description of the fortress and town, which the editor has been obliged to excerpt. M. Valentin Schneider has copied the style of M. Victor Hugo a little too closely. The editor most deeply admires M. Victor Hugo, and would stand any amount of his narrative; but when he gets antiquarian, the editor must really take care of himself.)

(Note from M. Valentin Schneider) :

‘The editor objects to M. Victor Hugo’s style of writing, and I of course submit; I am quite unused to narration. A friend of the editor tells me that he considers Victor Hugo the greatest humbug in Europe, who is seldom amusing without being improper. It seems now that Frenchmen must submit; but surely all the terrible faults and stupidities of M. Victor Hugo must be half redeemed by the tender and beautiful scenes in the convent in the Rue Picpus, in *Les Misérables*. I am not here to judge, I am only a Frenchman. Everybody knows we are pretty humble now. Every donkey may kick a dead lion. I will write no more in the style of M. Hugo.’

(Here follows a very violent attack on the Bavarians, which the editor has omitted, as tending to no good. The editor begs his readers to remember that M. Schneider is in the same position as a high-feeling Englishman would be had we lost Hampshire (including Portsmouth), with Kent and

Sussex, permanently; that London was half destroyed; that Windsor was a heap of ruins like Meudon; that the Archbishop of Canterbury had been shot; and that the House of Commons no more dared to meet in London than they dared to fly off the clock-tower, but were meeting at Oxford, as in old times. Heat of language must be excused to M. Valentin Schneider under such circumstances; we must allow him to continue his narrative. He is very angry at times, but his bark is far worse than his bite.—ED.)

Marie and I found ourselves in Luxemburg, with the drawbridge closed behind us. This, you would say, was not only indiscreet, but improbable. As for the indiscretion, I am one of the most discreet of youths, so that answers itself; as for the improbability, why, the fact actually happened, and therefore I argue that being a *fait accompli*, a thing actually done, it cannot be improbable.

An Oxford student tells me that I am wrong. He says that some of the greatest facts in history, facts which no one denies, were utterly improbable. He speaks of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the battle of Trafalgar; he says that both those things were highly improbable, yet he argues that they are *faits accomplis*. I cannot argue with that young man—I was educated by the Frères Chrétiens—I only say once more emphatically that a thing which actually happened cannot be improbable. It pleases you English to amuse yourselves with the logic of M. Louis Carroll. I think that his logic is all wrong from beginning to end. How, then, I beg of you, could *la petite* Mees Alice have seen the noble poem of Jabberwocky (German, I regret to say) *reversed* when she got *through* the glass? I say that M. Louis Carroll is all wrong, and that Mees Alice would have seen Jabberwocky just as it was printed. I am, for my own part, no casuist, like M.

Louis Carroll; but I will defy his casuistry here. Again, I beg of M. Louis Carroll to explain to me why he dared publish a poem so wicked as that of 'The Walrus and the Carpenter.' While the Latin nations have been living on the purest sentiment, the Teutonic nations have been going from one grossness to another. The wicked ballads of M. Louis Carroll are worthy of the *Fliegende Blätter* of Munich. M. Louis Carroll fancies that his political allusions can escape the microscopical eye of a Frenchman. Not at all. That ballad of 'The Walrus and the Carpenter' has a political signification. The walrus is the Emperor of Germany (Monsieur Tenniel, a Frenchman surely from his genius, has made him very like); the carpenter is the Archduke Charles—all German princes (may Heaven confound them!) learn trades; about the old oyster, who refused to go out walking with the walrus and the carpenter, I am puzzled. It could

not have been the French Emperor, because he did go out walking—that is to say, he mounted to horse, and took that little oyster his son with him. Also M. Thiers followed the walrus and the carpenter. I rather think that the oldest oyster is the Comte de Chambord; but I am not sure. Humpty Dumpty, who nearly smiles the top of his head off, is evidently the late emperor; and the allusion to 'All the king's horses and all the king's men,' is at least premature, not to say indiscreet. I do not, as a thinking Frenchman, believe that the Comte de Chambord will give the slightest assistance in putting Louis Napoleon on this throne again. Yet this political satirist, this M. Louis Carroll, hints that such an effort will be made, and made shortly. The English do not understand politics at all; and it would be much better if M. Louis Carroll would attend to his duties as a professor, instead of irritating a very high-spirited nation as the French

by political poems like that of 'Humpty Dumpty.' The *fish* are the English, that is patent. Look at the shameless political intention of this passage, when the French ask the English to stop supplying arms to the Germans:

'The little fish's answer was,
"We cannot do it, sir, because——",'

That is bad enough; but there is worse behind. With regard to your great public satirist, M. Louis Carroll, I say that he is all wrong. Look how he writes about Gambetta's appeal to Lord Granville:

'But he was very proud and stiff;
He said, "I'll go and wake them if——",'

Exactly the thing he did not do, because his coronet was at stake. He never dared to rouse the latent republicanism of England and of Europe about his ears. Hear your M. Louis Carroll again, with the Alabama claims hanging over his own shoulders:

‘ And when I found the door was shut,
I tried to turn the handle, but——’

That door is shut for ever to you English, just as much as the bridegroom’s door was shut to the five foolish virgins. You saw us down, and, by the memory of Inkerman, you never raised your hands to help us. May you be forgiven! I pass like a Frenchman from folly to seriousness. I think that that allusion to the five foolish virgins made me so suddenly serious. Perhaps also it was recollection, for, in the course of narrative, I am only just inside Luxemburg, and on a slope of turf above the bouc lie down with Marie near me, while the whispering wind went through our hair and moved the grass about our heads.

She said to me,

‘ I have heard of you so long, Valentin. I knew nothing of you, but I knew that I should love you.’

And I said,

‘Darling, I love you better than Jacques Cartier.’

So the little Paul and Virginia courtship came to an end for that time.

CHAPTER XVII.

You make love, you English, in one way, we in another. I think, for my own part, that you are stupid in your love-making, and that, moreover, you leave it too late in life. Is it conceivable that a fat rentier of forty years can be pleasing to a woman? For me I do not know. I should think not.

Mind, I say nothing of our *mariages de convenance*; that is a matter I do not understand. I am too young. It would seem that any mature woman would marry any man with ten thousand francs of rentes in France now. In England, I am told, the price for a clever and handsome woman is still higher; but of this I know nothing. It is possible, as I allow that the rule in

the great towns is different from that in the provinces. I only know that my father urged on my marriage with a penniless girl, as you will see.

I want again to be heard. I will dash at any young unmarried German whoever was born, with my bayonet; but I am *afraid* of those Landwehr men who are married. *They carry two or three lives in their hands*, and I am afraid of them. Married men fight with the ferocity of desperation, and with ill-humour; unmarried men fight for fighting's sake, with no *arrière pensée*, and with good-humour. I could give instances in our war, but your own poet Tennyson has found out the secret about the terrible power of the Landwehr. I don't admire English poetry myself, it seems to me entirely unmusical; but your Tennyson has an idea now and then:

‘ When all amidst the thundering drums
Thy soldier in the battle stands,
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.

One moment while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee,
The next like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for them and thee.'

I don't like the Landwehr at all, and I have seen a good deal of them in Lorraine. Let me ease my mind. Fiercer soldiers or gentler citizens were never seen. One of them came to us as we lay together talking on the slope at Luxemburg, and he said:

' Children, you will be cold here. Rise, and go into the town. When you are old enough, you will fall in love with one another, which will be a good thing if you reflect on three matters. That you two, if you fall in love with one another, are bound to go through eternity together. Eternity is like space, perfectly illimitable. Of eternity we know nothing; of space we know nothing beyond the double nebulæ; but we all know that time and space mean the same thing, and are illimitable. Life is but one small episode in eternity; as conscious-

ness and recollection began at birth, so consciousness and remembrance will end at death, except in the case of two souls which are brought together as yours seem to be. Conceive your two selves standing on the double nebulae, and looking into space. You must allow space—it is impossible not to allow it; there can be no end and finish of things. There is no end to things—there *can't* be. For me, as a Pomeranian, I believe that there is only one God, and that He is infinite and governs all. Whether space is filled with matter I do not know: I should think it was.'

‘In the mean time?’ I said.

‘In the mean time,’ he answered, ‘I think this, that you had better go to your friends in the town. There are French spies about, my little lad, who know nothing whatever about the infinities of space, and who don't know the map of their own country. Just go to some respectable house, or I shall be forced to have you locked up.

You are young Schneider. Your precious friend Cartier is somewhere in the town. Tell your father that he had better sell out on the German side, and move to the double nebulæ. Tell Cartier to mind what he is about in case of war, or we shall hang him. You French are perfectly idiotic; but that is no matter. Remember that life is only an episode in eternity, that space is infinite, and that this little girl ought to go to her bed. When the Culbute Générale comes, you may remember the name of General von Alvenstein the younger.'

'General,' I said, 'you spoke of Culbute Générale. What will be the watchword on that day?'

'Paris,' he said, laughing.

'That is not the word,' I said.

He thought for a moment, and then he said:

'Châlons, then.'

'That will not do,' I said. 'Is it Sedan?'

‘ Try Cologne or Berlin, boy, and take that little French girl in out of the cold. Nobody is likely to try Sedan except a lunatic.’

So Alvenstein the younger stalked away over the slope above the bouc, and left us watching him as he went. It is all over now, and you shall hear how we got through it. But the other night Marie and I were sleeping together, and she suddenly shook my shoulder. I asked her what was the matter.

‘ Valentin, Valentin!’ she said, ‘ strike a light.’

I did so, and then she spoke.

‘ Valentin,’ she said, ‘ General von Alvenstein was here in the room, at our bedside.’

‘ My darling,’ I answered, ‘ he was killed at St. Privat, and you yourself put a bouquet of autumn crocuses on the helmet on his grave.’

‘ That is true,’ she said; ‘ but he was

here for all that. He said that life was only one episode in all eternity.'

I quieted her, and asked her:

'Did he say anything more?'

'Yes; he said that there were one hundred thousand upturned feet appealing to Christ for justice, and that Christ had turned away his head from the world.'

'Were the feet French or German?'

'Both.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

MARIE and I went to a cousin of Mère Hortense, who kept a wine shop in the lower town, to which she directed me. The cousin was an old lady who seemed to expect us somehow, for she opened the door a little way, shut it again at once, and did not seem in the least degree surprised at seeing us. Marie was taken by her up to bed at once, and then the old lady came down to me again, and began getting me some supper.

‘And the news from Champagne then, my pretty little gentleman,’ she said; ‘have you been to the camp at Châlons?’

I answered, ‘No.’

‘Hah! I would like to see the dear

French army. We are all French here, you know.

‘And indeed I am French also,’ I replied, but I had time to say no more, for there was a loud trampling of men outside, and a halt at the door. Immediately after a sword-hilt was banged against the door, and a loud German voice called for admittance.

My dame was equal to the occasion. In one instant she had pushed me down on the settle before the fire, and caught up a blanket which she threw over me, saying, ‘Tuck in and go to sleep. When you are awakened, be stupid and know nothing at all. Don’t open the door till I tell you.’

At the third beat of the sword-hilt at the door, not twenty seconds after the first alarm, I sleepily cried out, ‘Who is there?’ for I was a French boy, and had my ideas. ‘Who is there?’ I said in a whimpering, sleepy voice.

‘Hauptmann Fischer,’ was the reply; ‘open your door, you treasonable old Jezebel.’

I believe that I should laugh if I was going to execution. I laughed now, but I laughed more when I heard a window overhead opened, and the voice of my new friend, querulously from the open window on the second story crying out, ‘Aux voleurs! aux voleurs! au feu! au feu!’

The transcendent old conspirator had torn her clothes off, as she afterwards told me, and was looking into the street in her —well, in her night-dress. I laughed as never boy laughed before, I think.

‘Come down, thou ridiculous old lunatic, and let us in,’ said the Hauptmann, laughing; and I gathered that Madame Hortense was looking rather absurd in the moonlight. Her tone changed in an instant.

‘Herr Hauptmann Fischer,’ she cried in German, ‘dear and highborn gentleman, I will put on my clothes and be down directly.

It is very late, and I am only a lone widow, but I will get my clothes on and come down.' Then she began yelling from the top of the stairs to me, while she was apparently dressing, 'Valentin! Valentin! Sleepy boy, let the gentleman in at once, do you hear? Holy Virgin, how the boy sleeps! is he dead?'

I arose, but now, having learnt a lesson out of the old lady's book, in my shirt alone, shivering and yawning, and I undid the bolts with my bare feet upon the cold stone floor. The Prussian guard were in the room at once.

The Hauptmann took me by the two shoulders, and looked at me in the face; he said at once, 'This is young Valentin Schneider. Boy, where is Cartier?'

I told him frankly that I had not the least idea, and he saw that I was speaking the truth. 'Put on your clothes, little gentleman,' he said, 'you will catch cold. I see you speak the truth; but would you

have told on your friend had you known where he was?"

I replied, "You might have burnt me alive, and I would not have done so."

There was a murmur of applause from the whole guard when I said this. The sentiment seemed to meet their views entirely. A young man of Bonn (the young men of Bonn are generally the rudest among the Germans) knelt down and put on my socks for me.

This was young Muchnitz. He lay quite close to my brother, and from the position of the two bodies, I am inclined to think that they had been assisting one another before they died. It is awfully strange, yet perfectly true, that my brother died barefooted, and that the three young men who lay with him behind the hedge in the potato field had only their stockings on.

It is most absolutely certain, that although we may never know the details, the 17th of the French line were surprised in

their beds above Fond de Givonne, in the early morning. I found four young men lying dead together under a little hedge on the top of the cutting. All four had their boots off, and one had been sleeping without his stockings, probably from sore feet. It may be suggested that the camp followers had stripped them. That is absolutely ridiculous; before the war heated itself into fury, the Germans were most careful of the dead, and in fact made one take one's hat off in the presence of the corpses. Besides, how was it that with the exception of these four, I saw nothing which looked like the plundering of corpses among so many?

However, I am, after the manner of that master of fiction, Eugène Sue, getting discursive.

By the time I was dressed, the old woman was partly dressed, and came into the room with her gray hair down like Madame Macbeth, an awful figure, fit for any murder in the history of the world.

Madame Macbeth did I say? Try Judith; try Salome, the daughter of Herodias. She came in wanting nothing but John the Baptist's head in a charger, to make a perfect murderer, and she said,

‘What will the good Hauptmann order to drink then?’

At this point I went off in an *éclair de rire*. What you call at school the *bathos* was too much for me. The Germans, such as understood French, laughed loudly also, and the Hauptmann said,

‘Come, mother, we only want to be friendly. We want Louis Cartier. You will get yourself into serious trouble by harbouring him. Potz tausend,’ he said, turning to me, humorously, ‘your father sends you out in pretty company. Do you know, for this old fool would never understand, that the Ordonnance Department here has been robbed of certain very important plans?’

I told him fairly that I had not the

wildest idea of such an event having occurred, which was strictly true.

‘Well, it is so. These Luxemburgers would do anything, and one of them has these plans; and we believe has handed them to that scoundrel, Jacques Cartier. If he will give them up he may go; if not, we shall take our own course with him. Is he in the house, mistress?’

‘On my soul, no!’ said the old woman.

And it came on my mind afterwards that the Roman Catholic religion is the most accommodating in the world, for a more thundering lie was never told under the sun; but she got quit of it by card.

‘Well, I must search the house at all events,’ said the Hauptmann. ‘Sergeant, go forward. Young Schneider, you come with us.’

In the cellars there were beer and wine; on the ground floor nothing suspicious; on the first floor nothing particular, save that in opening a doubtful-looking closet a very

tall broom, which had been set on end in that closet, came majestically down on the Hauptmann's head, and knocked his helmet on to old madame's toes, which gave rise to complications and apologies. We searched the whole house over, save one room which the old lady wished to be spared.

'It is little Marie's bedroom,' she said. 'You all know little Marie, of the glacis, Messieurs. You may surely trust an old woman's word, and not awake the girl. She has come in on a visit to me.'

'A dear little soul, niece to the very man we want. Go in, old woman, tell her to cover herself up, for we must search here in spite of your word.'

Madame Hortense went in. Almost at once we were admitted. A light was burning, and we saw before us a sight which none of us ever forgot. A very beautiful child sitting up in bed, with her hands folded on the counterpane, and her hair falling round her in masses like those of

Fra Angelico's angels. A child who seemed to wonder (ah, you English cannot act)—a child who was amused at the invasion of her bedroom by these good, quaint savages, the Prussians. The room was searched, and nothing was found. Of course not. The Germans made their adieux with all apologies, and left Marie sitting up in bed, with all her clothes, and Mère Hortense's clothes also about her, to keep her warm.

The little heroine had got her uncle in bed with her, boots and all!

CHAPTER XIX.

MERE CHRISTINE told me to remain in Marie's bedroom while she showed the Prussian gentlemen out. I did so with much modesty, standing with my face to the staircase, down which the Prussians were being escorted by this good woman, who stood at the head of the stairs with a candle, entreating them to take care how they stepped. 'For, Messieurs,' she said, 'the stairs are very old, and my landlord is not a good landlord for repairs; landlords are never good to solitary old widows like me. Ah! if my good man Max was alive, we should have had these stairs mended. Take great care, Messieurs, the narrow stairs are to the right.' (Here a big young man of

Audernach went thundering and crashing down to the bottom amidst roars of laughter from his comrades.) ‘Ah! Monsieur has hurt himself, I fear;’ and so the old lady went on, holding the light above the retreating leather and brass helmets.

I much regret to say that, in spite of all our troubles, I have always an inclination to laugh at those helmets even now. I never can forget them groping down that narrow winding staircase, with the old Frenchwoman holding the light all wrong, and giving them utterly wrong directions. I know that it is immoral and undignified to laugh at our conquerors, but I cannot help it. The English laugh at the French; the French, again, caricature the English and Germans. The nation which most habitually caricatures itself is the French. We have laughed ourselves into a pretty state of affairs. I see that you are making all your leaders and politicians ridiculous in *Vanity Fair*. You will reap the fruits

of this. This is done, I believe, by an Italian.

Well, I laughed when I saw the pickelhaubes go downstairs, and I laughed more when I heard the door banged behind them. I turned again into Marie's bedroom, and she was sitting up in bed laughing also, with her finger on her lips.

'My little angel!' I said, 'these German dogs are gone. Have you been frightened?'

There was a great heave in the bed; her uncle put himself out sideways, and in another moment Jacques Cartier, with touzled hair, stood by her side, grinning from ear to ear.

'Here is a little heroine for you,' he said, 'never flinched for a minute, though she knew that her wicked uncle had the plans in the bed; or, to be more correct, that she had them in her bosom. There is not a finer girl in all France. Did I bruise you with my boots, darling?'

‘ You frightened me out of my wits, uncle, when you began laughing, and made the bed shake so. I thought that we were all undone.’

‘ I could not help it,’ said Jacques Cartier, ‘ Mère Christine was so clever and *bizarre*. I am born to be hung, but I should laugh at the scaffold, I think. Now, lie down, pretty love, for M. Valentin and I have something to say. Here comes Mère Christine.’

I went up to Marie’s bed, and bent down and kissed her in all boyish loyalty and admiration. She threw her arms round my neck, and drew my face close to hers, so that my hair and hers were mixed together. I wondered at this favour very much, until she whispered shortly and sharply in my ear, ‘ Valentin, you fool, be careful. Make him destroy those papers, or we are all in trouble; he has committed felony. He is a receiver of stolen goods.’

O, the dissipation of the romance! Still

I took two kisses more, and got two smart boxes on the ear in return. I then turned to Mère Christine and Jacques Cartier, and I found that Mère Christine was preparing to light the fire, a matter at which I very much wondered.

‘You see, M. Valentin,’ said Jacques Cartier, ‘that I have so far succeeded in my object in getting into Luxemburg. Well and good. Now I have to get out again. Of that we will talk presently.’

‘But, Jacques, dear, you cannot get out.’

‘Can I not? You will allow that I got in.’

‘Yes.’

‘You will soon have to allow that I can get out again. *Bon.* I may or I may not. In case I do not, you must attend to me with all your attention.’

‘Good,’ I said. ‘Can we not write down anything?’

‘Nothing,’ he replied. ‘I am about to

burn everything. I am going to tell you what you must tell your father, and no one else. You must mind what I say very carefully.'

I determined to do so, and I told him so.

'I have done hitherto all that your father asked me. I have endangered my life for him this night. If I am taken here, I shall never get out of the prison at Trèves at all, because I have become a receiver of stolen goods in his interests. Well and good, I am a Frenchman after all. If I am taken, nothing must be found on me. You will go free, I shall go to prison. You must tell your father these things, and be sure to forget none of them. The plan of the Prussians is to refortify Luxemburg by star forts, a mile from the enceinte all round. By doing this they violate Dutch neutrality, and are therefore committed to anything. I have here the plans of those forts, but I must burn them; nevertheless, assure him of the fact. France is nego-

tiating with Holland for the sale of Luxembourg, and Prussia will fight sooner than give it up. In case of war now, France could not stop Germany short of Châlons. Your father should back up General Niel in every way. Our army must be reorganised. Can you remember all this?"

I said it over to him.

'*Bon*,' he said. 'Now we will burn these papers,' and to my horror into the fire went a whole pile of Prussian staff maps and plans. Some of our precious friends had stolen them; Jacques Cartier had received them, and now he was destroying them. I was a felon by construction. I said so.

'My dear,' said Jacques Cartier, 'there is no felony in politics.'

I rather doubted that, but I said nothing on that point. I only asked, 'How are you going to escape?'

He laughed. 'You must go a long way by yourself now,' he said. 'Opposite the

church you will find a shop; in that shop are maps. You buy the map which contains the Eifel forest, and you come as fast as you can to a place called Mandercheid. I will meet you there. If I am taken, go straight home; no one will stop you. If you hear nothing of me, go there. If you go home, tell your father to *sell out in France.*'

There was a little time in deliberating where all our things should be left. In the end, I took charge of a shot-gun, a large number of cartridges, and about eight hundred francs. Jacques Cartier took the carbine and a game-bag, and prepared to start; how, I did not exactly see, and so I asked him.

'I am going out of that window when the signal comes, and along the roofs of three or four houses. We shall have a messenger by and by.'

In about an hour there was a tap at the window; it was opened, and Mark jumped into the room barefooted.

CHAPTER XX.

I WAS to leave the house, and go by Trèves to Bittburg alone. Meanwhile, Jacques was to join me at Bittburg, and I was to send from Trèves the following telegram to my father :

VV. T. P. S. V. N. I. A.

It would be impossible for any one to make out this telegram, from the mere reason that it was absolutely simple, and that Cartier and my father were in perfect confidence. When I say perfect confidence, I mean that my father was in as much confidence with Jacques Cartier as he was with any one; that is to say, he had sent out Jacques Cartier as a spy, but had sent me to watch him.

Let us, however, examine this telegram,

and see how easily the cleverest are cheated when two men understand one another.

First, V V.

That is simply ‘Vendez, Vendez.’ Sell at once. My father sold out all his rentes immediately, and bought into the English three-per-cent consols. He said afterwards that those rascals of English would fight for their money, and that they had twenty miles of sea-water between them and a gentleman. You see, my father was one of the old school, and did not like the English as I do. Now we come to

T. P. S. V. N.

That is to me pretty plain. ‘*Tout est Perdu Sans la Vie de Niel.*’ I think that Jacques Cartier was right here. I think that if Niel’s scheme of the reorganisation of our army had been carried out, and if the Radicals had not opposed it, we might have been in a different position. I cannot say, but certainly Niel’s scheme was better than Gambetta’s. There is the same

difference between these two as there is between Epimetheus and Prometheus. Now we come to the last letters of the telegram,

I. A.

‘Ils Arment,’ I read it. Certainly it was perfectly true, and my father acted on it. I think that my father rather wished the Germans to win in what followed. I rather think that his interests, as well as his inclinations, went that way. For me, I would have swept the streets for a living had France won.

Now, I had the telegram, and now Jacques was to be got out of the town. It appeared, on consultation, that we must at once communicate with Père Hugon, who kept the tannery down on the Alssette. When I say that he kept the tannery, I only mean that he kept it from fire. He was a very poor old man, who watched the premises by night, and who slept all day. Some one must go to him. I of course determined to go.

But I was stopped at once. ‘I should have difficulty enough in getting out of the town myself,’ they said. ‘Marie must go.’ And at last I consented to let Marie go, with the reservation that I was to follow her twenty yards behind.

Marie was very soon dressed and let out. The street was very quiet as she trotted along, so quiet that the twenty yards diminished to fifteen, then to ten then to five, and at last to nothing at all; so that when we came to old Père Hugon’s tannery I had my arm round her waist. When we got to Père Hugon’s tannery we knocked at the door, and he opened the window three stories above, and cried out, ‘Au feu!’ just like Mère Hortense had done.

‘Be quiet, you old fool,’ I said.

Whereupon he began crying out, ‘Aux voleurs.’

‘You old idiot,’ I said, ‘you will have the Prussians on us directly.’

He went for a light, and reappeared in a large pair of gold spectacles, through which he looked at the bouc, the moon, and the stars.

I cried out impatiently, ‘Come down; the patrol is in the next street.’ And then he shut the window.

I spoke the truth; the Prussian patrol *was* in the next street, and was on us before we could get in. Fischer was in command of it, and he said to me, pausing as he passed, ‘Get your man out of the town quietly. If there is any difficulty, go to Von Alvenstein.’

‘You mean Cartier?’

‘Yes. He has no business here; get him out quietly.’

I had some spirit, and I asked, ‘What has he done?’

‘Ask that in two years’ time,’ said Fischer, and passed on.

Old Hugon admitted us. I opened the conversation by saying that Jacques Cartier

must be got out of the town in safety. Old Hugon took off his spectacles, and, ordering Marie out of the room, stroked his beard, and said :

‘ That is very easily done.’

‘ I am glad to hear it,’ I said ; ‘ I thought it was difficult.’

‘ Has he got the plans of the outlying forts on him ?’ asked old Hugon.

‘ No,’ I said ; ‘ they are burnt.’

‘ Hum ! What an ass is Jacques Cartier ! Did he believe them real ?’

‘ They were real,’ I said, but with a little wonder.

‘ Young goose,’ he said. ‘ Those plans which Jacques Cartier took so much trouble to steal were carefully prepared for the French market. You met Von Alvenstein ?’

‘ Yes.’

‘ Von Alvenstein is not in the secret of those plans. They were prepared at considerable expense (for the Germans) on purpose to be captured by spies. The fool

Cartier has burnt them. Just like him. Well, tell your father to sell at once, and buy into English funds. If they respect our neutrality, it is all which we can hope for.'

'But, sir,' I said, 'France can fight for herself.'

'And get beaten,' said old Hugon, who was Parisian born. 'Tell your father that in two years from now we are ruined; and now get out of the house. I will see Jacques Cartier all safe. Go home and to bed. Start in the morning for Bittburg, and you will meet Cartier there. Remember that you are a spy, and are watched.'

I took Marie home, and kissed her as she went to her room. I was very uneasy in my mind about matters. But I had a holiday before me, and I knew that two years' drill at Metz was coming to me. I had an idea that I was passing now, or about to pass, the pleasantest time in all my life. So, in the early morning I roused

Mère Christine, and I went in and said good-bye to Marie ; and then I took my bag, my fishing-rod, and my carbine, walking out of the street of Luxemburg as though it belonged to me. Passing out of a certain gate I heard one Prussian sentry say to another, 'That pretty boy is a French spy. He looks too good for such work.' I turned at once and said, 'Sir, I am no spy.' The German said, 'Your face betrays you, boy, you are not.' 'Arrest him,' said two or three others ; and arrested I was, to have coffee with much milk in it, Bretzels (a delicious form of food) and butter. They let me go at last, those jolly Germans, and stood looking after me. I went down the road, between the high-piled rocks by the little river. I ought to hate them, but I love them. I ask, is not the world large enough for both of us ?

Why, look you, English, at your own case. What did Napoleon the Great write to your Prince of Wales, when Napoleon

had lost all? ‘The most constant, the most generous, the most powerful of my enemies.’ The English had the principal part in sending him to St. Helena; he the idol of the majority of the French. Many Frenchmen vowed eternal hatred against the English; your name was a name of infamy to most Frenchmen. At Waterloo the Emperor cried out in the last disaster. ‘Mon Dieu! ils sont mêlés ensemble;’ that was true. Then the English and French were against one another. Forty years later they were mêlés ensemble once more, at Inkerman—Guards and Zouaves shoulder to shoulder. These hatreds do not continue themselves, my friend. If you are as young as I am, you may see French and Prussians stand by shoulder to shoulder, in defiance of the world. Have you not seen it yourself in the boxing matches at your public schools?

However, I must get away on the road to Trèves, on the road to Bittburg.

CHAPTER XXI.

I WAS now entirely alone, and I found that to be extremely pleasant. I loved the society of Jacques Cartier beyond measure, yet there was something very pleasant in being entirely alone.

There are probably few things more beautiful in the world than the exit from Luxemburg, on the road towards Trèves. Behind you are the great bridges spanning the glen, above and around are yellowish gray scarps and pillars of rock, fringed with copsewood and vineyard, before the glen goes on winding away towards fairyland, where there are no fortifications and no Prussians. The river dances merrily on at your side, and you can gather flowers, or

fish, or sing, or lie down and sleep; you can do anything you like.

And if you are very young and in love, you will have every now and then that feeling which the learned call pre-cordial anxiety. That is to say, you will be anxiously wondering where a certain young lady is, and what she is doing. I am not sure whether that feeling is pleasurable or painful. Men of the middle age sometimes say that they would give all their wealth to feel it again.

You see that everything groups itself round one pure and holy object, and for the first time in your life you feel that you are totally unselfish. You are raised into a higher and nobler atmosphere.

Here, for instance, by the river is a flower, the 'Impatiens noli me tangere.' How beautiful it is, deep yellow with pearly green leaves! *Bon ciel*, how splendid it would look in her golden hair! There must be a trout there where the water rushes

down so freshly; we will put our rod together and have him. A splash, and the speckled beauty lies panting on the grass, among the cowslips. I wish she were here to see him, what would she say at our luck? Why, she would say, sir, that you, being so transcendently happy yourself, ought not to deprive one of God's creatures of its happiness; so you (or, at least, I) take the hook gently from the trout's lip, and send him wriggling away free.

This is sentimental folly. I quite allow it, but I never knew much good of a young man who was not a sentimental fool when he was in love. When the shattered brown keep of St. Etienne burst on my sight suddenly, I gave a cry of gladness, but in an instant more I was very sorry. *She* was not here to see it soaring in the summer air.

I walked swiftly when I did not stay to play, and struck the Moselle at Wasserbilig. The river was rushing on majestically, green

now in the early summer, a noble flood,
dashing onwards to meet her bridegroom,
the Rhine at Coblenz.

‘As the silence that is broken
When the wished-for word is spoken,
And the heart hath a home where it may dwell,
As the sun and moon together,
In a sky of splendid weather,
Is the meeting of the Rhine and the Moselle.’

I was fairly in Germany now. What idiots our people were ever to think that we could make the Rhine provinces French! Will the Germans make Alsace and Lorraine German? Will the British ever make Ireland English? I leave these questions to MM. Bismarck, Erckman-Chatrian, and the late Lord Londonderry, commonly called Lord Castlereagh. Since the utter submission of the slave-holding states in America, and since the new movement for home rule in Ireland, I have rather given up imperial politics as a hopeless business. For the Irish, having an amount of freedom which

we shall not get in a century, say they are a down-trodden and oppressed race. In the name of heaven, how? Still, I only speak as a Frenchman, as one who is puzzled by your insular politics, which I think ridiculous.

At Wasserbiling I met a German boy, and we were comfortable together. He kept my clothes while I swam in the river, and then we talked. He was a very nice boy, he hated the French in general, but he liked me in particular. We had sausage together, and we talked.

‘You hate us?’ I said.

‘Yes,’ said the German boy, ‘we do.’

‘Why?’

‘For many reasons.’

‘Old reasons or new?’

‘Not for old reasons so much; you beat us heavily, and without cause, until we beat you at Waterloo; no, not for old reasons.’

‘The English beat us at Waterloo,’ I said.

‘They held the ground till we came up. They did nothing more than that. They would have been in the forest but for us. You say that because they beat you through Spain.’

‘Alas,’ I said, ‘wherever the English met us they beat us. England is a name of bad omen to us.’

‘You seem to be happy enough together now,’ said the German boy, ‘you are robbing and plundering in company. There is no safety for an honest nation. Look at Pekin.’

I apologised for the summer palace spoliation as well as I could.

‘The English and the French are the greatest robbers on the face of the earth,’ said the German boy. ‘England has appropriated India without a shadow of right; and you French, wherever you came you robbed and stole. In our public library at Trèves there is a copy of the “Gallerie Française;” a catalogue of pictures stolen by Napoleon, which he had to give back.’

I asked him if he would kindly hand me my right stocking, which lay on the grass beside him. I was getting rather the worst of the argument, you see.

‘Mind,’ he said, as he handed me the stocking, ‘when our turn comes we shall take what we want, and do, not as we have been done by, but simply do what is necessary for our own safety. However, *we* are friends. Where are you going?’

‘To Trèves.’

‘I also. Come, and I will show you Eiger. Come in my boat, I have a boat below.’

This was entirely delightful; the German boy let his boat float down stream and talked to me the while.

‘French boy,’ he said, ‘is your name Schneider?’

‘Yes, Valentin Schneider.’

‘You are to be let go where you will, and do what you like. My name is Von Lindenau, son of the Librarian at Trèves.

We have heard much of you. We hope to get your father on our side. You, however, are French and will remain French.'

I rather thought of throwing him out of the boat, when he said this about my father; but he looked very cool and strong, so I only said, with great heat, that my father was no traitor.

'No, no,' he said. 'See where we are passing. This is the mouth of the Sarre. What battles have been fought here for eighteen centuries!'

My good humour was restored, and I begged his pardon for being angry. He bent over from his oars and kissed me. 'I wish you were a German,' he said.

'But about the battles?' I asked; 'where are we now?'

'In the reft in the hills, which in old times divided Roman and Celt, and which now divide Teuton and Celt. Look to the left instead of looking into my eyes.'

I looked to the left, and there was the

great monument of Eiger towering over the trees. I held my breath; it was the most magnificent specimen of Roman work I had ever seen. And then we floated on.

‘When you force it on us, Valentin, we shall push our frontier farther forward, or perish as a nation. If you ever say your prayers, pray that you and I may not meet, for I like you so very much.’

And so we floated on, talking about many things, and at last he said, ‘Here is Trèves.’

I got my things out of the boat and went with him along the street, for he told me that he would show me the way to the Hôtel d’Angleterre. Passing the corner of one street I clutched his arm and said, ‘What is that?’

‘The Porta Nigra,’ he said, coolly, ‘the gate between the Roman and the Celt in old times, now the gate between the Teuton and the Celt. In a year or two we shall pull it down and build it up again to the west of Metz.’

I went to bed after my dinner at the Hôtel d'Angleterre. I rolled myself up in the sheets, but I could not sleep. I looked out of window and saw the horrible watchmen in long black cloaks, who frightened me. They looked like fiends; but they were not fiends, because they were very kind to an old Frenchwoman, who was very obstreperous and who apparently could give no account of herself. I thought that this old lady looked very like Mère Mathilde, but I was not sure. At last, trying bed again, I got to sleep. But whatever turn my dreams took there was the black gate at Trèves being moved, stone after stone, off my chest, and all through the middle of the night I was engaged in removing each stone to the west side of Metz. Towards morning Marie appeared (in my dream), and pelted all the stones merrily right and left, and so I slept heavily until the garçon came and shook me roughly by the shoulder.

Then I rose, and having had my break-

fast, went on the road to Bittburg. I left Trèves, the beautiful, by the northern gate. We wished to have her, but we shall never get her now. The question is, shall we get back Strasburg, or even Metz? However, the peace of continental Europe is impossible until we do.

CHAPTER XXII.

I WALKED very much faster than an old woman could possibly do, and in one day I had arrived at Bittburg, twenty-three miles. Bittburg was by no means interesting, and I stayed only one day and two nights for Jacques Cartier. I found it to be pleasanter without him than with him; for, dear fellow as he was, I was compelled to confess that he seemed always in trouble, and what is more, seemed to be always getting me into trouble. I was rather tired of it.

I had no fault to find with Bittburg. I had a little room which opened on the street, a rather dull street. But my room was very pleasant—I think the best room in the house, with a bed in a little alcove.

The good woman of the house paid very particular attention to me, and the head of the gendarmerie (as we should call it in France) came to see me. He told me that although I had no passports, I could go in any direction I liked. This was very civil, for indeed I had no passport at all, and I thanked him very much.

‘Little gentleman,’ he said, ‘I have a son just your age.’

‘I should like to know him, sir,’ I said.

‘Well, you know his cousin.’

‘My friend of yesterday?’

‘Yes. Now, my little man, I would not have sent him out on such an expedition as this to save my life.’

I hung my head.

‘I do not think that your father is right. Yet your father is a good man. See now, don’t cry. Go where you will. Make a holiday and enjoy yourself. I think a wolf will come to your door to-night, little wehr wolf.’

‘A wolf, sir?’

‘Ay, with bare legs,’ said the Prussian, laughing. And lo! a wolf did come.

I had gone to bed; but I could not sleep, because of what he had told me about the bare-legged wolf coming to the door. At about twelve o’clock at night, I, lying awake, heard as plainly as possible something moving at that door. I got out of bed and looked out through the French windows. The street was still and empty, and I could see nothing at all. I went to bed, and had dropped off to sleep, when I heard as plainly as possible a very small voice, coming from I know not where, say, ‘Valentin, my feet are so cold.’

I had been dreaming, and I had dreamt of a picture by M. Horace Vernet, of the retreat from Moscow, and of a poor conscript lying on the cold snow, with his feet turned up. I notice that the pictures of M. Horace Vernet are apt to come to one in one’s dreams, I think, more than those

of M. Gustave Doré. I dreamt, I say, of this picture, and how our poor French lay down and died with their feet to the sky.

- I thought that I was asleep. But the voice seemed natural. Once more, 'Valentin, my feet are as cold as death. Let me in, for the memory of old Sedan.'

'Old Moscow is what the ghost means, I said aloud. And I was fairly roused by the voice saying, 'Not Moscow, Valentin; Sedan, Sedan; let me in.'

I was awake now, and I went to the door and opened it.

My brother Mark stood before me, shivering in the moonlight. (You will remember that I did not know him for my brother.) He said:

'Let me come in and lie on the floor, it was so cold outside that I could not wait till morning.'

'Were you waiting for me, Mark?'

'Yes, Mère Mathilde is after you to fetch you back. You are to be at Metz for two

years; now is your only chance of pure liberty, my darling. Jacques Cartier is stopped; we can go on. Let us fly in the morning, and I will show you the most wonderful things in the world. But my feet are so cold.'

'Get into my bed, Mark, it is warm, and then we will talk.'

He was not long in accepting of my invitation, and I rolled my Jersey shirt round his feet to warm them. I rolled the coat of one of the 17th of the line round them at last; but they were too cold for warming then.

'Valentin,' he said, when we were in bed comfortably, 'you must come on with me.'

'Whither?'

'To the Eifel. You are your own master, you can go where you choose. Let us escape to-morrow morning and leave those others to find us. Mère Mathilde has been detained at Trèves for being turbulent: we

are utterly free; let us go on until we are sent back.'

Before we dropped to sleep, I had agreed. When I said 'yes,' he rolled his heavy head over on my chest, and said, 'We must fly early, my feet are very cold.' And then I went to sleep in good earnest, and dreamt persistently of Moscow and the passáge of the Beresina. I dreamt also of Marie, and of many things ; but dreams are always of the past, never of the future.

Or I should have dreamt of the warm feet now twined in mine, cold for ever. I should have dreamt of a shattered wall and a very pretty boy in a drummer's dress, against whose breast General von Alvensleben put his finger, and said,

' Madame Schneider, you must go back. I know all; I cannot allow you to follow these two English ladies.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

I HAVE often seen summer days which ended in thunderstorms. I have been out, for my part, gathering spring flowers in the afternoon, and at night have arrived home drenched and miserable. For me now it is all equal. Providence has afflicted us bitterly, and Marie and I pray that the affliction may do us good. You English are unable to understand the depth of our affliction: everything has gone well with you. I cannot perceive how you could have helped us, yet you will forgive a Frenchman for going half mad over his ruin.

To pleasanter matters. I was by no means half mad when I awoke Mark at Bittburg. That time was the summer day

of my life. I was young, innocent, pure, audacious, and I was bound on a great holiday. Mark and I stood alone in the street together, without one single care, or one single hope which troubled us.

Stay, there was a single hope, and only one. The hope of penetrating beyond that sheet of yellow rolling down, which spread above Bittburg, and of seeing the wonders which those downs enclosed. There was a hope, and it was realised.

Mark and I went arm in arm for a little; but then we parted, for we were in the forest, and there was but one track through the copsewood. I had my fishing-rod, and he told me to get it ready. That was not exactly possible, as the forest was so thick, but I did my best. I had my English trout tackle perfectly ready in five minutes after Mark and I sat down by the side of a little stream which he told me was the Kyll.

That is a very lovely stream. Your

English streams are purer, possibly, but I have seen few of them, and must not speak. Your Itchen is wonderfully pure, yet not, I assert, more pure than our Arques. To compare the Kyll with the Arques or the Itchen, would be absurd. I do not do so. I think that for perfect beauty of surroundings, the Kyll would surpass any English or French river. One place, where the stream comes through the magnesian limestone was so beautiful, that I christened it 'The Nymph's Bath.' A young Englishman, of the county of Derbyshire, now studying as a cadet at the college of Woolwich, in England, tells me that these glens in the Eifel are far surpassed by the glens in Derbyshire. He is of the most excellent, this young man from Woolwich. He says that he has a plan by which there shall be no more war at all, and that all nations shall live in peace for ever. His name is Jones, and he belongs to your engineers. Possibly, I am wrong in giving

his name, because it might make injury to him, and stop his promotion. That, however, I do not believe, with a nation so generous as yours is.

Jones happened to be fishing on the Kyll, when Mark and I arrived at the banks of that stream. Jones happened to have hitched his flies up on the other side, and so happened to meet us without a rag on his body, he having taken off his clothes to recover his flies. I put it to you as a young English gentleman whether you can tell another gentleman to be a gentleman if he is stark naked. *I can't.* I asked him what ever he was doing there; and he told me to ask my grandmother (she has been dead these twenty years), and also offered to knock my head off. I declined both propositions; and by degrees, as his clothes went on, I saw that I was speaking to a gentleman.

Oddly enough, Mark says that he knew he was a gentleman from the first, because

his feet were so white and clean, and that his nails were like filbert-nuts. Well, that is only what Mark said.

Jones got his clothes on, and I saw at once that he was a gentleman. Jones spoke French very well for an Englishman, and he thought that my brother Mark was a gipsy; to tell the truth I thought so too. Jones was puzzled about me entirely, and took me for granted, as something of which he had not read in Cuvier.

‘I see you have an English rod,’ he said. ‘Let us fish up the stream to Kyllburg—I on one side, you on the other. Your handsome gipsy friend is coming, I suppose. Do you know this country, my lad? I want to see Kyllburg.’

‘Fish up, and you will see it, Englishman,’ said Mark.

And so we worked up the stream. We caught in the slow parts of the stream chub and grayling, in the sharper parts of

the stream we got trout. Before we got to Kyllburg, the Englishman had left me. I was just landing a small chub with the assistance of Mark, when he came back.

‘Come with me, my boy,’ he said.

I left my rod and went with him. He pushed aside the briars and brambles, as I followed him. We stood by a still pool by the river, and I looked for the first time at Kyllburg.

Archduke Frederick Charles, do you ever dream? If you ever dream, try to dream of Kyllburg. Until you awakened its echoes with your drums and trumpets as you marched to ruin France last year, those echoes had not been awakened for four centuries.

A mass of tangled vegetation, and through the vegetation the noble red sandstone cloisters asserting themselves. I am as utterly unable to describe Kyllburg, as I am to describe Mont St. Michel. I looked on the formulated red sandstone

cloisters, and the (apparently) unformulated vegetation, and I said to the Englishman,

‘Tell me about this.’

He almost whispered,

‘This is the death of an idea,’ he said ; ‘the men who piled those beautiful stones together thought that they could have peace in this world. You see the ruin of their work. Women and idiots may get peace, but no man. Be as silent as death, boy. Give me your carbine ; is it loaded?’

I gave it to him.

‘Watch those roses, those wild-brier roses,’ he whispered to me ; ‘how prettily they trail over that pillar. The dead monks might even admire the ruins of their own creation. Give me another cartridge.’

I did so.

He raised the carbine to his shoulder, took a steady aim, and fired right into the roses.

In one instant a desperately wounded

wolf bounded out and stood at bay before us with grinning fangs.

For the life of me I cannot say why I ran on to the wolf to prevent a second shot. It was a kind of mad, stupid instinct. The beast was on his haunches when I approached him. I heard the Englishman shout, 'Stand aside, I have another cartridge.' I heard Mark say, 'It matters nothing, he is the wolf's brother, he is wehr wolf.' Then the beast met my eyes and turned over stone-dead before me. And then, as it seemed to me, I passed into the garden of the Arsacidæ, and remained there some time.

The fact was that my ague was on me again, and I had fainted away. Mark says that I fell flat on the wolf, and that the Englishman was half mad at not being able to put another bullet into him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I PROMISE that no grass grew under our feet. Mark struck away from the main road at once, through a dell fringed with copsewood, a dell which carried its waters towards the Moselle. I can see his pretty bare feet brushing through the impatiens and the geranium as I write. The stream was a very small one where we hit it, but other streams came in and made it larger and larger. At last there was a cascade, and I wanted Mark to go down and bathe under it, but Mark said, 'No, we must push up aloft at present.' And so we clambered through the woods until I was nearly tired.

'Mark,' I said, 'we are following in a path.'

‘To be sure we are,’ he said, ‘and we are nearly at the end of it. Now load your carbine, and keep perfectly steady. When he rises at us, fire here.’

My pretty brother took my hand and laid it on his jugular vein.

‘Between the cheek and shoulder, you know,’ said Mark. ‘He will in all probability charge, in which case jump over his back and dodge behind a tree till you have loaded again. Don’t let him catch you between the legs. He is not difficult to escape.’

‘But *who* is *he*?‘ I asked, not, I confess, without anxiety.

‘Who is who?’ said Mark.

‘I mean, whom am I going to shoot?’

‘Why,’ said Mark, ‘Old Moses, to be sure. I love you, little gentleman, and I think you love me. We are out on pleasure together, and I want to give you the best pleasure. Our people tracked Old Moses to his frank, and I have given you

the chance of killing him. I can tell you that the priest at Mauderscheid would give me twenty-five francs to put him where you are now.'

'But who *is* Old Moses?' I once more asked.

'Why, don't you know? He is the largest wild boar in the Eifel. I know of one larger in the Ardennes, but Old Moses is the largest in the Eifel. The priest at Lazel had a try at him with one dog, and he killed the dog and wounded the priest in the leg. That was when he was quite young, a mere pig. "He is an old boar now, and will spare nothing. It is a matter of life or death to attack him.'

'I think,' I said, 'that some other amusement would be better.'

'You need not be afraid, dear,' said my unknown brother. 'If you miss when he charges I will stand close to you and throw myself on him while you reload. I shall have my knife. I may kill him with it if

you have wounded him with your shot; but if I fail, for mercy's sake don't hesitate a second time in firing for fear of hitting me. Remember that your life is worth a hundred times mine. I am only a poor dog, and you are a gentleman.'

'Mark,' I said very quickly, 'I don't like this adventure, it is extremely dangerous.'

'Why, of course,' said Mark, 'it is very dangerous—the sort of thing for an Englishman. Why, an English officer in India will walk up to a tiger and shoot him stone dead before he has time to spring. We are not less courageous than the English.'

I said, 'Certainly not;' but I could not help wondering whether the English officers who shot tigers on foot felt exactly the same anxiety about their personal safety as I did when I was going to attack the great wild boar of the Eifel. I reflected, however, that I was a Frenchman. I am told that your Lord Nelson at the battle of

Trafalgar signalled to his fleet, 'England expects every man to do his duty.' I think that is a very fine sentiment. The duty was to fire the guns with rapidity and precision until we and the Spaniards had left off. That duty was done well, and we were beaten. (It was that grand *bête* Napoleon, who never in passing was a Frenchman at all, but a Corsican, an Italian, who forced out Villeneuve.) The duty of the English was to stand by their guns. *My* duty was to follow Mark.

I beg of you to reflect.

When a nation loses honour and the power of courage, she has lost everything which is worth having. That nation can *live* no longer—she may *exist*.

In matters of national honour the slightest boy or the weakest woman can give the key-note to a trumpet which will rouse a nation to utter desperation and to ultimate triumph. You want examples? *Hé! bien donc :*

The death of Madam Garibaldi ended in the freedom and consolidation of Italy.

What song is that which you English boys sing called 'Casabianca'? Casabianca was a French boy, yet there is surely not an English boy who does not envy him his death.

Look once more at Gambetta's hair-dressers' and linendrapers' apprentices, who at the last moment rode with scarlet trousers and white cloaks straight at the Prussians before Paris. They could not fight, but those young men were not dastards.

Those who undervalue the courage of the French might find themselves terribly mistaken.

Why do I say this? Why, because I wish to draw a moral. I am not in the least degree answerable for the morality of my moral. Take it as you find it. The members of a great nation *dare not be cowards*.

No, depend upon that. For me, I am not particularly courageous; for example,

I used to cry when I was left alone in the dark when I was young. But mutter the word 'France' in my ear, and I will go to the stake at once. As for crying, you cannot turn that against us, because your own terrible Collingwood, when he was sent on board ship at ten years old, sat down on a gun and cried like a baby; and when the lieutenant came to him and told him not to cry, and said that they would be kind to him, little Collingwood offered the lieutenant the cake which his mother had given him. I think that your Collingwood was almost worthy of being a Frenchman.

The last remark, however, is a little too strong. I am no Chauvinist, but I do not acknowledge the equality of any nation with the French. At the same time, I had better recur to the actual facts which occurred in this wonderful boar hunt.

The boar's frank was among a lot of tangled briers. I could actually see the beast's hide as he lay asleep.

We had a short conversation.

‘You see his rump?’ said Mark.

‘Yes.’

‘Now calculate where his heart is, and fire; then load again like lightning, for he will be on us.’

I heard a stealthy footstep behind me, and felt a touch on my shoulder. It was only a half-naked young man, one of the ubiquitous Carbonari.

‘Fire straight through that rose,’ he said; and I did so. It was like lighting a powder magazine. The beast, with a noise between a grunt and a roar, was on his haunches at once, looking round for his enemies. I had loaded again before he made an effort to charge. It was a feeble effort only. I put another bullet into his head, and he dropped dead; to ravage the potato-fields no more.

The young man took possession of him, and sold him to the landlord of the hotel at Trèves, as I afterwards learnt. Meanwhile Mark hurried me away over the hill-side.

CHAPTER XXV.

‘THERE are no vines here,’ I said to Mark.

‘No,’ he said, ‘we are out of the region of vines. The vines here only grow about the rivers, and we are beyond rivers now—we are among the lakes. Climb this last hill bravely and you shall see one, such a one as you have never seen before.’

How there could be a lake on the summit of the high down covered with short grass, I could not imagine; but when we got to the top I gave a loud cry almost of alarm, for I was on the edge of the Schalckenmar, and one false step would have sent me rolling down two hundred feet into the forty fathoms of water, which is without any shore whatever. As it was, one foot slipped on the slippery grass, and Mark

seized me, for, heavily laden as I was, I must inevitably have been drowned had I rolled over.

There was a vast hollow depression in the hills about three-quarters of a mile in diameter, but only at one place a small cliff of rock. All round this turf sloped down nearly perpendicular into the water, the profound depth of which was shown by its being of a sapphire blue. Salt water shows the sapphire blue at forty fathoms, as our sailors tell us, but fresh water at a much greater depth. A German professor tried to fathom this lake, but found no bottom at two hundred and forty English feet. One of the horrible things about it is that it has no outlet at all, but is hemmed in on all sides by a perfectly level line of downs without a break. People who have once seen it never forget it. It strikes me with terror in my dreams even now. There is not a tree or a bush round it, and it is as terrible now when filled with water as it

was in old times, when it was a roaring volcano, casting stones and fire all around the neighbouring country.

‘What an awful place,’ I said, ‘what an awful land! But, Mark, is there no way by which the water gets out?’

‘No,’ said Mark. ‘Once it was an opening out of hell, and the fire and smoke used to burst out, but the good St. Christopher, who bore Christ through the river Jordan, prayed to the bon Dieu, and the bon Dieu filled it up with water. And then Lazarus, who lies in the bosom of Abraham, prayed also the bon Dieu that He would let the water drip out of the bottom of it in hell, and cool the tongue of Dives in torment. The bon Dieu agreed to that, because He loved the kindness of Lazarus towards a man who had been unkind to him when he was living. So when there is a long drought, you can hear Dives crying for water, but when the lake is at its full height, Dives is silent.’

‘But—’

‘Ah, wait; you do not know all. When the drought is very long, a shepherd’s dog runs away, and, coming this way, goes down there, leaps into the lake, and disappears. That dog is one of the descendants of the dogs that licked the sores of Lazarus, which goes to ask Lazarus to plead with the bon Dieu for rain. You see Dives fed the dogs but neglected Lazarus, so they plead for him. After a dog drowns himself in this lake rain always comes.’

I thought it highly improbable, but I kept my opinions to myself. ‘Who told you this—well—legend?’ I asked.

‘Mère Mathilde; and she said that it was a very good legend, because it shows that the bon Dieu has pity even on souls supposed to be lost.’

‘You must not say such things,’ I answered. ‘The story is a foolish story, an old woman’s story. What does Mère Mathilde know of religion? Leave such things to the priest.’

Mark promised that he would do so; and we had a little religious conversation, which showed me that he was actually ignorant of the very first principles of Christianity. He thought that Joshua was a Prussian, and that Samson had carried away the great gates at Thionville, and was afterwards engaged in the burning of Moscow. I decline to repeat all I gathered from him as to his notions of New Testament history, as we lay together in the short grass over the lake. For example, I asked him, 'Who was St. Paul?' He answered that he was the Paris gentleman who had the contract for the tents at Châlons, but who had quarrelled with Marshal Niel. He had heard about St. Paul's having been a tent-maker evidently, but farther than that he seemed to know nothing. 'Who was St. Peter?' He was the Pope; and Victor Emmanuel and Garibaldi would have hung him long ago, only Mazzini and Victor Emmanuel had fallen out, because

Victor Emmanuel had discouraged the Carbonari. He appeared to have a dim notion of contemporary politics, but none whatever of religion. I asked him if he went to church. He replied, rather proudly, that he was not a woman. I could do nothing with him, he was lost in ignorance; but there are many such. I was determined to consult my father and mother about him. I had not taken my first communion then, but I made a secret vow that if Heaven gave me grace, this poor outcast, Mark, should go to the altar with me.

I burst into tears. I loved him so well, and yet we had no hope, no aspiration in common. He asked me why I wept; and before the sun set behind the hill, I had told him the whole great story of the Redemption, and he sat on the grass and stared at me in wonder.

‘Why, Christ was a hundred times greater than Mazzini himself,’ he said, ‘and the Son of the bon Dieu! And He rose

from the dead! Let us leave here now and seek Him. The Frères Chrétiens are wise men ; they will tell us where He is. If we can find Him, as we will, we will tell Him how hardly we poor folks live, and He will mend that. Let us go hence, you and I, and seek Him through the world.'

'But He has ascended into heaven,' I said.

'Up there?' he answered, pointing aloft.

'Ay, but He will hear us if we call on Him,' I said. 'He is not here, but He is risen. He will come again when the world is fit for Him, and then there will be peace.'

'Let us ask Him to come quickly,' said Mark.

We did so. We knelt down together on the bare down, and I prayed with him. I ended by praying that Christ would come as soon as the world was fit for Him, and give that universal peace which existed on the night of His birth.

We rose from our knees, and Mark said,
'The world is not fit for Him yet. We must
wait.'

The answer to our prayer had come. On the opposite down, across the lake, was a squadron of Prussian cavalry—blue, silver, and gold—wending along under the westering sun. We had got our answer for the time.

CHAPTER XXVI.

‘LEND me your carbine, Valentin,’ whispered Mark.

‘Why?’

‘I could pick off one of those men,’ said Mark. ‘Nothing would be more easy.’

‘And what would be the use of that?’ I asked.

‘There would be one less.’

‘You, however, would be hung for doing it, and so there would be one less on our side.’

‘That is true,’ said Mark very quietly. ‘I did not think of that. Let us go round the lake and hear what they are saying. Be stupid, you Valentin; do not understand German. I might get my knife into one of them to-night, for all you know.’

‘Mark, Mark! have we not been praying together?’ I said.

‘Yes; and the bon Dieu sent an answer to our prayer in the form of a Prussian squadron. It is certain to me that the bon Dieu will have us fight. I will have one of those men before the morning.’

‘We are not at war, Mark,’ I said; ‘and even if we were, such an act would be sheer assassination. In any case it is against the laws of war.’

‘Laws of war!’ said Mark; ‘you are talking nonsense. There can be no law in a practice which puts aside *all law*. What is the case? The Germans wish to ruin us, and we wish to ruin the Germans. That is fair, is it not?’

I said, ‘Yes.’

‘Good,’ said Mark. ‘In war you wish to kill your enemy. Is it not so?’

I said, ‘Certainly.’

‘Why not, then,’ said Mark, ‘stop all war by killing your chief enemy before the

war begins? The assassination of one man might stop the whole thing. If on the opposite hill you saw Frederick William, Von Moltke, or Bismarck, would you not fire on them?"

"Not in time of peace," I said; "that would be the act of a scoundrel."

"You are a fool," he answered fiercely. "Give me that carbine."

He fell on me and struggled with me for it. He was stronger than I, but I retained possession of it, not, I am sorry to say, without bruising him heavily on the head with the butt end of it.

He was dazed and partially stunned. He sat up on the grass, and said, "May Heaven forgive you."

I was at his feet in one moment. "I only did it to save you, Mark."

"To save me, ay, I know," said Mark; "but you might have let me save France first. You have done a very foolish thing, and forty thousand dead men will curse

you for ever. I could have hit that man, if you had not fought me. I cannot now, for my head is bad. Curse him! I might get my knife in his ribs, though. Look at him, and curse him!'

I was rather surprised at this outbreak of Mark's, and I was very much alarmed at it. I looked at the Prussian officer on the other side of the Schalkenmar. He was a tall man, who sat his horse well; and he had brought his horse to the very edge of the slippery gazon, and was looking into the lake, two hundred feet below him. The distance was, as I now know, three hundred and fifty yards; and if Mark had killed his horse, he would have fallen into the lake hopelessly. I felt that we had had an escape, and I felt also that I was with a very dangerous companion. I looked at the Prussian officer, and then I turned to Mark.

'Mark, if argument will do nothing, love may do somewhat.'

'Well.'

‘Let us go back to Sedan.’

‘Let me kill that man first.’

‘No, no; I will not have it,’ I answered.

‘Well, then, see,’ said Mark. ‘You go back to Sedan, and leave me to kill him.’

‘You shall not do it; I will kill you first,’ I said.

‘My darling,’ said Mark, ‘do you think I would mind being killed by *you*? I will stand up and you shall shoot me dead. You do not know what you are doing when you forbid me to kill this man.’

‘I will have no assassination.’

‘But, see, my brother; he sits there with his horse’s hoofs on the verge of the gazon glacis. We could kill him so easily now. Give me your carbine.’

I held my carbine the tighter. ‘What is the use of shooting Prussian officers?’ I said rather vaguely.

‘Not much,’ said Mark. ‘Kill one, and you get a dozen in their place. But this one surely has been given into our hands.’

‘This one!’ I said. ‘Do you know him, then?’

‘Do not you?’

‘Not I.’

‘Why, it is our bitterest enemy—it is the Archduke Frederick Charles. You will give me your carbine, will you not?’

Let us thank Heaven that such fearful temptations come seldom in the life of a man. My first instinct was to hold my carbine very tight, because I determined that, if the thing was to be done, I could do it myself, and not let Mark do it. Then I had a petulant wish that the Archduke would go away, and not tempt me; but the Archduke sat in thought, and peered into the lake.

He little knew what awful danger he was in. One shot would have brought him and his horse down two hundred feet. But I could not do it. The carbine was loaded, and a wild duck flew over the surface of

the lake. I pretended to fire at the duck, and so emptied the carbine.

‘You missed him,’ said Mark in a whisper. ‘He sits there on his horse still. Give me another cartridge and your carbine, and I will kill him for you.’

‘On the contrary,’ I said, ‘we will walk round the lake and talk to him.’

‘That is very just,’ said Mark. ‘I give my word that I will not molest him. Let us hear what this dog has to say.’

So, passing round the end of the lake, we came among the Prussian cavalry.

Mark was by no means a bad actor. I rather flatter myself that I am an exceedingly good one, though my friends disagree with me. At all events, Mark could act well enough to imitate me. Our *rôle* was the *rôle d’ingénue*, and we did it to perfection; at least, I did it to perfection—Mark, my brother, overdid it a little.

For example, we first came on two hussars with lances and flags. We spoke

to them. Both Mark and I knew German; but our utter and entire ignorance of it then cannot be described. We knew nothing on earth but French. The two young men spoke to us in German; but we were so utterly and stolidly ignorant of that language, that they lost their tempers, and called us names. At this, Mark winked at me, and one of the young men saw him do it.

To put matters entirely right, and to disarm suspicion, I took Mark round and round these two young men, and discoursed about their personal appearance in French. I pointed out to him their eyes, their nose, and their moustaches. Finally, to crown all, I went up to one of the young men, took his foot out of the stirrup, and, holding it in my hand, pointed out to bare-legged Mark that the spur of the German was longer than that of the French.

You may destroy France, Poland, or Ireland, but you will never destroy the un-

utterable impudence of those three nations. And please, young English gentleman, who lives at home at ease, answer me this. Would you not sacrifice everything short of your soul to be friends with Ireland? You know you would. What we have done for Poland you would do for Ireland. To tell the truth, you are doing more for Ireland than any one has ever done for us. But, young English gentleman, think of old France brought down to this level. Don't be angry with us if we tear at our chain ; you would tear at yours. We cannot bear it much longer. One desperate rally there will be, and then we shall die as a nation. But I wander a little. My argument is, that although we may perish as a nation politically, yet we shall still remain as peculiar a nation as the Jews, in consequence of our illimitable impudence.

We left the two young Uhlans, and at once inspected the staff-officers. They understood French, and so my remarks told.

I took Mark up to one solemn hauptmann, and discussed his personal appearance and the state of his horse. I took up that horse's hind foot, and held it in my hand, discoursing to Mark as to the bad shoeing of German horses. The hauptmann was beginning to get angry at this liberty; but I heard the staff-officer in gold spectacles, who sat next him, say:

‘Let the boy do what he likes. He is mad. He is the little Schneider of Sedan. He sleeps with the wolves. He is a Carbonaro. Let him get on to the Archduke.’

I put down the horse's foot, and went on just as if I had heard nothing at all. Mark, however, was not so fortunate. The staff-officer in gold spectacles hunted him back, and I went on to the Archduke alone.

I have known strong men, in good health, who were nervous at being presented to the Emperor. I, poor young lad, with many guilty secrets, was going alone to see the Archduke Charles.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE Archduke Frederick Charles turned to me and told me to wait. I had never seen a real prince before, and so I looked at this one and examined him very carefully.

I was very much impressed with him. You ask me, as a Frenchman, ‘Did I like him?’ I answer, as a Frenchman, that I liked him very much indeed. The most amiable princes I have seen are the Emperor Napoleon, the Crown Prince of Saxony, the Prince de Joinville, and the Archduke Frederick. He looked steadily on his right, and at last he put his hand down on my shoulder, turned my face to his, and said:

‘Well, my pretty little spy, you will not make any great success in your present business.’

‘In what business, your Highness?’

‘In the business of a spy,’ said the terrible Archduke.

‘I am no spy, your Highness.’

‘Your pretty frank face and your eyes tell me that. What is the distance between your house at Sedan and Madame Debranche’s at Mézières?’

‘I decline to answer that, your Highness,’ I replied.

‘As if I did not know,’ said the Archduke, laughing. ‘If every Frenchman was as loyal as you are, we should have great trouble with you. Where is that little scoundrel, Mark?’

I was utterly astonished at his knowing of Mark’s existence. I told him where Mark was.

‘Tell him to mind what he is about,’ said the Archduke. ‘The pitcher that goes often to the well is broken at last. I am afraid that he is a sad little rascal. Can you ride?’

‘Yes, sir ; I can ride well. I had a pony once.’

‘And broke his knees on the chaussée in Bazeilles, I doubt not,’ said the Archduke.

‘Your Highness does not know Bazeilles, I see,’ I replied volubly.

‘No ; I was never there,’ said the Archduke.

‘Ah !’ I said ; ‘but you should go. The road—macadam, I think they call it—is an English road, with fine trees on each side.’

‘Trees, eh ?’

‘Yes, most beautiful trees. And also the street is not wide at all ; and when you come to the end of the street, you can see right into Sedan.’

‘It must be a pretty place ; but Fond de Givonne, that is prettier.’

‘One of the pleasantest places in the world,’ I said, proud of talking to a real prince. ‘You should come out and gather the autumn crocuses on the hill between

Fond de Givonne and Givonne itself. Hah, dear prince, the view on that hill is lovely. You look straight into Sedan and beyond La Chapelle—'

The Archduke turned on me and said, very emphatically, 'Hold your tongue, boy. If you are a fool, remember that I am a gentleman. Say *no more*.'

'I could not conceive what he meant at that time; but when I saw the white Arabs of the Chasseurs d'Afrique wandering about riderless, masterless, seeking for water on the same hill, I saw that I was a fool and that he was a gentleman.

With all their Uhlans, they never found out one thing. The road, cursed by all Frenchmen for ever, which runs into Fond de Givonne, between the potato-field and the corn-field (as the crops were on the 1st of September), *runs through a deep cutting*. In five minutes more I should have told him *that*; but he was a gentleman, and stopped me. The road in their map is set

down as level. I might have saved one thousand lives by telling him the truth; but he stopped me because he did not think it right for a gentleman to get information from a boy. But here are the facts as I look at them. The horrible slaughter of the 17th of the line in the potato-field occurred simply because the Saxons were not aware that the road went down through a cutting. A Saxon officer told me that his colonel ordered the first company to double back through the second, when he came to this obstacle. He then countermarched his regiment round his centre, with what object I am unable to state, not believing in German regimental tactics; and *then* the French were aroused from their beds, '*than* which,' said the Saxon engineer officer, 'nothing has happened more disgraceful to the art of war since those turbulent riots which occurred during the civil war in America, and which it pleases the Americans to call great battles.'

Well, the Archduke was very good to me. He was cruel to us, you say. I ask, have *you* never been cruel? We were very cruel to his nation; it was his time for *revanche*. You English have been more cruel than any, except the French. You have no right to rail against the Germans for their punishment of us. We lost, and we have paid; we may pay in another manner some day. But you English, what right have you to speak of the Germans in this sanctimonious way? The quarrel was a very old one; it was fairly fought out, and the Germans won. We have to pay. But if you say the Germans were cruel, look at yourselves, my friend. How did you get and keep India? How did you get Canada? Last and worst of all, how did you get your new provinces, one might almost call them kingdoms, of Australia and New Zealand? I see your answer in your eyes. They were inferior nations. Quite so; but we French are apt to be logical. Were the French

and Spaniards at Saint Sebastian of the inferior races? No; I admire your insular Chauvinisms immensely, but you will hardly go so far as to say that the French and Spaniards belong to the inferior races. The man who says that the French did not fight well at Sedan is a liar.

I lose my temper. I heat myself unnecessarily. It is the French way. We are as proud as you are, which is saying much; and sometimes I enrage myself over this German occupation. Bismarck has been a fool about that. We would have paid him every penny, but he should not have insulted us by putting an execution in our house. And we have behaved very well. I know I should not like to leave a French army of occupation in England on such terms; very few of them would come back. But you, with the strip of silver sea, could repudiate any treaty forced down your throats in a moment of desperation, and you could hem yourselves in with an iron

band, making commerce impossible to other nations. You are the arbiters of the world's fate. Keep your trust, and keep it honestly.

The Archduke Frederick might have been thinking of all these things, or, on the other hand (as is very probable), he might not. He, however, got off his horse, and told me to come and have mittagsessen with him. I complied at once, as a hungry boy would, and we sat on the grass together and had sausage and white wine.

The Archduke seemed to take a great fancy for me. At one time he asked me for bread, and as I was cutting it he passed his hand over my hair. Mère Mathilde says that he had a son who was drowned at my age. Of this I know nothing; I only say that the terrible Archduke, who has left a red band on the map of Europe from Sierck on the Moselle to Paris on the Seine, seemed to me one of the gentlest and kindest of human beings. Look at your own

Nelson. Was he not kind? See what he did at Naples.

We were so comfortable together that I should quite have forgotten that he was an archduke at all, had it not been that a solitary lancer stood in front of us, lance to heel. I had got so familiar with the Archduke, that I was going to ask him whether the young man might not dismount and have his dinner, when the young man solved the difficulty. He waved his lance three times to the right, jumped off his horse, took off his helmet and hung it on his arm, and then knelt bareheaded in the sun.

‘Get up,’ said the Archduke to me. ‘It is the King.’

I rose and saw him. His face is familiar enough to all of us now, so I need not describe it. He held his hand shading his face, and he said, ‘Frederick, I wish to speak to you.’ They went apart—Frederick Charles on foot, bareheaded, and bending

low, and they talked together, about what I know not.

Two gentlemen were left sitting on horseback, behind them were eight or ten Uhlans, as they are called; who knows why. I looked at these two gentlemen with great interest, because it so happened that I had never seen two such gentlemen before.

One had a dark moustache, and looked very wan and worn. The other was much older, apparently a very old man; but his beardless face actually looked younger than the handsome face of the man with the moustache. The old man had an immensely powerful face; but the younger one, though his face was very powerfully cast, had a restless look, as though he was either suffering or thinking—in fact, he was doing both.

I gazed on them intensely. I cannot say why, maybe I have some genius. As I was looking at them, the man with the moustache, who had evidently been riding

hard, took out his pocket-handkerchief to wipe his face. He dropped it, and I ran forward, picked it up, and gave it to him.

He took it from me, and smiled at me—such a weary, dull smile.

‘You are a French boy, surely,’ said VON BISMARCK.

‘Yes, sir.’

‘I should have guessed so from your looks and your politeness. This is a pretty boy, general.’

VON MOLTKE turned and looked at me.

‘He is a very pretty boy, indeed. Where do you come from, my child?’

‘From Sedan, sir.’

Von Moltke gave one glance at Von Bismarck, and then looked over my head. I heard a deep voice say:

‘What boy is this?’

‘A boy from Sedan, sire,’ said Von Moltke.

I turned and looked. Behind me were the King and the Archduke Frederick

Charles; in front of me were Von Bismarck and Von Moltke. As I looked on the four stern faces I lost nerve. I cannot tell why, but I would have given anything to cry. I turned to the King, and I said:

‘If you please, sire, I want to go to Mark.’

The Archduke (who spared Audun la Tige) said suddenly:

‘This is a very nice boy, sire. Let him go to his brother Mark.’

The Archduke little thought that he was unconsciously telling me what I did not know myself. The King smiled kindly on me, and then they rode away. As they went I heard the King say:

‘The boy is from Mézières, is he not?’

And Bismarck said:

‘From Sedan.’

Then I was on the bleak down alone. I saw the King, the Archduke, Von Moltke, and Von Bismarck go trotting through the grass, followed by a steel-blue line of ca-

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